SHOPPERS DRUG MART
SEE WHAT'S NEW... CHECK OUT OUR LATEST OFFER ON PAGE 36

It's Easter, I'm taking my day off and I'm going to church. I probably won't see you there.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD, METROVIEW, PAGE 28

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Your essential daily news | THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2015 | High 8°C/Low -3°C Mostly cloudy

TROTTING TRIBUTE

Riders trot around the Riding Hall at Spruce Meadows on Wednesday, in a tribute to Marg and Ron Southern, founders of the internationally renowned equestrian facility, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary. Story, page 12. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Hospital wait time a pain in the back

HEALTH CARE

Albertans leaving the country for spine surgery

Jennifer Friesen
For Metro

With pain shooting across his waist and lower back, Ken Skoreyko could only ever sleep in the fetal position, sometimes bedridden for days on end. To keep working his job in the oilpatch, he needed open-back surgery, and he needed it soon.

According to Alberta Health Services, 90 per cent of Albertans in need of spine surgery face wait times between 26 and 37.4 weeks.

But because he also had faulty hips, Skoreyko was told he had to wait two to four years before he could have his operation.

"I told them I can't wait two to four years, I'm hurting now, I can't work and you want me to live on painkillers?" he said.

"I'm not wasting any time. The minute I sell my acreage (in Grand Prairie), I told them I'm hopping on a plane and I'm dealing with this."

And he did.

On Dec. 17, 2014, he got on a plane to Thailand. By Dec. 24, he was on the operating table at the BNH Hospital in Bangkok. Back in Alberta, he wouldn't have even been through an MRI yet — his last appointment had been set for May 19, 2015.

Within 17 days of Skoreyko's surgery, two other Albertans underwent back surgery at the same hospital. And they aren't alone.

More coverage, page 15.

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

It's a 3D-printed hand! Page 27

KidSport Calgary sees jump in demand for fee assistance

RECREATION

More parents turn to group for help getting kids in the game

Robson Fletcher
Metro | Calgary

By the time CJ's son turns 12 in July, he'll already have a season of lacrosse under his belt.

The Strathmore mom admits her youngster has been interested in the sport for a while but she had been putting off enrolling him because of the $400 registration fee and the $400 in equipment he'd need in order to play safely.

Passions among preteens can fade fast, she knows, and spending that kind of money just to see if he liked the sport didn't seem feasible, given the family's current financial situation.

That's where KidSport Calgary came along to help with roughly half the cost, and now CJ's son is set to start playing in April.

"It's just nice that he has this opportunity, finally," said CJ, who asked that her last name not be published.

This year marks 20 years of operation for KidSport in Alberta, a non-profit organization dedicated to lifting financial barriers that prevent kids from playing organized sports.

For thousands of families each year, KidSport Calgary provides up to $400 per child for registration fees and up to $500 specifically for hockey . METRO FILE

> **Life events happened, and he's had to make some sacrifices like the rest of us**
>
> Strathmore mom CJ on her son having to forego lacrosse until this year due to financial circumstances

KidSport Calgary provides up to $400 per kid per year for registration fees to qualified families, said executive director Kevin Webster, and up to $500 for hockey, specifically.

Last year, it funded 3,079 kids in Calgary and another 298 in surrounding communities, marking a 25 per cent increase from the year before.

So far this year, Webster said 966 kids have been funded with $257,348, marking an increase of 33 per cent from the same period in 2014.

For CJ, the growth in demand is not surprising.

As someone who has worked in the social-services field herself, and then recently found her own family in a difficult fiscal situation after a series of life events, CJ said the actual people who make use of supports like KidSport don't fit the stereotypes many others might hold.

"There's this perception that it's all these lower-income families that need the funding, but it's not anymore," she said. "It's the kid next door, the kid down the street that needs this support. But luckily, it's there."

Since 1995, KidSport Calgary has supported 28,000 young athletes with more than $6.4 million toward registration fees for organized sport.

The organization receives no government funding and raises all its money through donations and third-party events like the Shaw Charity Classic golf tournament.

"We will continue to work hard to fundraise the dollars needed to meet the growing demand," Webster said.

"With the marketplace changing, we will need to work harder than ever."

GET THE CARD

To qualify for assistance from KidSport Calgary, a family must supply verification of income, and there's now a new and simpler way to do that — the recently implemented fee-assistance card from the City of Calgary.

The card is part of the city's new "single entry" system for low-income residents who have access to a variety of subsidized services, provided they can prove they qualify.

ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

ANIMALS

Guzoo owner plans to stay open

Guzoo's owner isn't ready to admit defeat, but soon his private Alberta facility will be without big-draw animals like the tigers and lions.

Lynn Gustafson told Metro Wednesday he's making "rehoming" plans for the bulk of the exotic animals, as well as the cougars and wolves, at his controversial Three Hills area attraction, which opened in 1990.

"We're going to find new homes for those that we can — there will be a few where I don't think it will be possible," he said in an interview, one day after the provincial government told Metro the zoo had 30 days to clean up its act and address years-old infractions.

But Gustafson said he's been given little time to discuss possible solutions with the province.

"It's the same line they give every time," he said. "I'd say God help all the zoos as there's no way they can do what's being asked."

Gustafson said he's not auctioning off animals, as was stated in another media report Wednesday, but plans to work with out-of-province zoos willing to take them in.

Provincial spokesman Duncan MacDonnell said Tuesday an investigation of the site in early March turned up concerns related to "animal health-care, general animal care, animal protection, public and staff safety (and) annual inventory."

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

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School being built with no gym or phys-ed plan

EDUCATION

Board thinks it can hammer out deal with other facility

Jeremy Nolais
Metro | Calgary

Construction of a northeast Calgary public high school is underway, but officials confirm no plans have been locked down for where attending students will keep active.

The high school, due to open in September 2016, will be the first in the city built without a gymnasium, as the plan has been to enter into a partnership with the neighbouring Genesis Centre. The province has touted the arrangement as a blueprint for future school developments as it works to better utilize public space and cut down on costs.

But nearly two years after the school was approved by former premier Alison Redford, no contract has been finalized between the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) and Genesis.

Dave Prisco, spokesman for Alberta Infrastructure, said there is still the potential of building a gym onto the school itself but said a "letter of intention" was drafted with Genesis at the outset.

"The partnership was a key consideration in government's approval of the project," he said. "There was a strong desire from government not to duplicate services that already exist."

On Wednesday, Premier Jim Prentice and other ministers gathered out front of the construction site for the high school and pledged to see through the facility and hundreds of others around the province.

1,800

1,800 students will attend the northeast high school, but physical education is only a mandatory course in Grade 10.

Publicly, school board and Genesis officials say they're confident an agreement will be reached, but sources speaking on condition of anonymity say there are concerns about the costs the CBE will be forced to pay to use the centre.

Brad Anderson, executive director of Genesis, said talks about a partnership are in the "initial stages" and wouldn't specify the rates he would charge the school board.

"Most likely, it will depend on the time of the day," Anderson said. "We are able to work out, for their physical-education program, below-market rates based on the volume of business they're doing, and we're kind of entering into it with a bit of a reciprocal agreement. Maybe we'll have access to their building in the evening and weekend, renting out classroom space for groups and that sort of thing."

Infrastructure Minister Manmeet Bhullar addresses the crowd at a school announcement this week. Also seen are MLAs Dave Rodney and Teresa Woo-Paw, as well as Premier Jim Prentice.
JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

It does appear the school's construction will be cheaper, as the CBE has pegged estimates in the $35-45 million range, while other high schools have come in around $50 million.

Frank Coppinger, the CBE's superintendent of facilities, said it would be "premature" to discuss the price tag for using Genesis.

"I'm sure that we'll reach a reasonable settlement," he said.

"The feedback we've gotten is that the timing of access of the gyms is not an issue," Coppinger said. "A lot of the use is in the morning and the evening, not during school time."

MENTAL HEALTH

Province searches for new approach

Students may soon see better access to in-school mental-health services, as the province is examining best practices to create a more proactive approach.

The 193 funded resources for students across the province are going through a review process in order to be consolidated into a more uniform provincewide approach.

One program, piloted in Red Deer, is being expanded and studied for its effectiveness.

"Our government will expand mental-health programs to reach students and youths at schools across the province, modelled on a very, very successful program," said Premier Jim Prentice. "It's harder to be a young person today than it was back when I was in a school like this."

A pilot program between Alberta Health Services' Addiction and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network, Red Deer Public Schools and Red Deer Primary Care Network takes a proactive approach and helps schools identify youth with mental-health issues.

The four divisions taking part in the pilot projects will be Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools, Chinook's Edge School Division, Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools and Medicine Hat.

HELEN PIKE/METRO

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CRIME

Suspect sought after car with disabled passenger carjacked

Morgan Modjeski
Metro | Calgary

A woman suffering from cerebral palsy was taken for a ride with a carjacker after the vehicle she was in was stolen at gunpoint, according to police.

Det. Jack Russell says a call came in around 10 a.m. when a support worker had her 2007 Toyota RAV4 taken from the Marlborough Mall.

"The driver was forced out of the vehicle allegedly at gunpoint and the car was stolen with the disabled passenger still on board," Russell said.

The woman was found a short time later in the 5000 block of Marbank Drive N.E., according to police, after the thief stopped and pushed her out of the vehicle.

Both women, the driver and the passenger, were speaking with Calgary detectives on Wednesday. Russell said neither of the victims was injured.

"It doesn't happen every day, fortunately, and, at the end of the day, it's good that both victims are safe and well," he said.

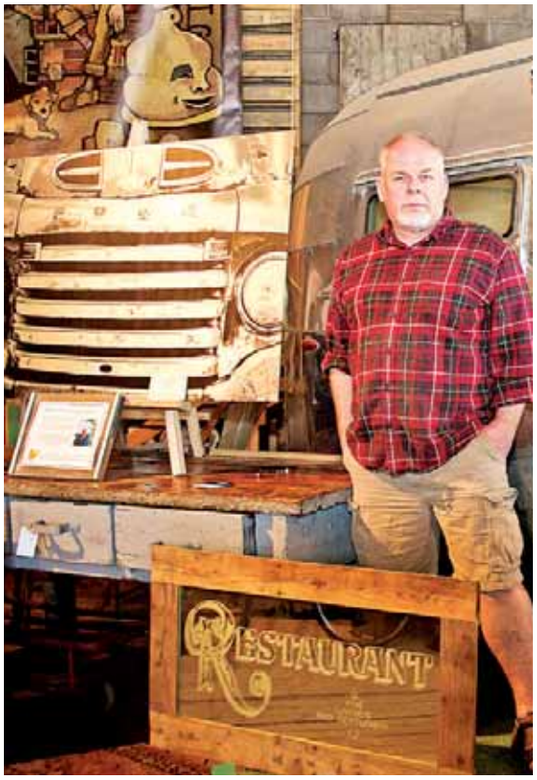
Police said the carjacker is a white woman between the ages of 30 and 40 with brown hair. At the time of the offence, she was wearing a grey hoodie with a dark jacket overtop, black pants and brown footwear.

Neither the thief nor the vehicle, described as light blue in colour with licence plate ZSK727, had been located by police as of press time. Officers are also collecting CCTV footage from the area in hopes of identifying the perpetrator.

Russell explained that if members of the public find themselves in a situation where they're being robbed or carjacked, its better to co-operate, get to safety and then call 911.

"If something like this happens, it's better just to give up your piece of property … and then phone 911," he said, adding later, "because life is more important than a piece of metal."

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the Calgary Police Service at 1-403-266-1234 or Crime Stoppers.



Photographer Christian Van Schepen showcases his work out of a vintage Airstream trailer in a space formerly occupied by Reclaimed Trading Company. ANNA BROOKS/METRO

Artists turn to pop-up shops

ARTS

Trailer Trax offers up affordable retail space

Anna Brooks
Metro | Calgary

Artists and entrepreneurs struggling to find affordable spaces to rent in Calgary have turned to Trailer Trax, a vintage pop-up shop initiated by Reclaimed Trading Company in Ramsey.

Kelly Kask, owner of Reclaimed Trading, said pop-up shop communities seem to be popular in cities like Vancouver and Toronto, but not so much in Calgary.

Kask said what started out as one artist setting up shop in a vintage Airstream trailer has turned into 10 trailers, with a waiting list backed up to January 2016.

"The pop-up shop concept is really popular in other places, but you come to Calgary and people have never heard of them," Kask said.

"We put the first trailer in and now there's an eight month wait to get in — it just tells you there's a shortage of artistic space in Calgary."

Photographer Christian Van Schepen held his first exhibit at Trailer Trax and said he was able to get exposure he wouldn't be able to get anywhere else in Calgary. With the low cost of renting out the trailer for 30 days, Van Schepen added that it was a lot easier selling his work without the pressure of renting out an expensive space.

"Photographers in this town have a tough time," Van Schepen said. "If you try going through a gallery, they take 50 per cent of what you sell for if they even want you at all.

"This was a springboard for me to get honest opinions on my work from a lot of interesting people."

CRIME

Clorina admits to killing woman, child

A man charged in the death of his relative's 35-year-old wife and her five-year-old son has admitted guilt.

On Wednesday, Guevara Wilson Clorina pleaded guilty to the first-degree murder of five-year-old Gabriel Manzano and to the second-degree murder of Chona Manzano.

Police started their investigation after they were called to the 200 Block of Evanspark Circle NW at around 12:50 p.m. on May 16, 2013.

There, they discovered both Chona and Gabriel stabbed to death on scene.

Police then circulated the details of a vehicle associated to the residence to nearby law-enforcement and it was located by RCMP near Olds, Alta., where Clorina was taken into custody.

He also pleaded guilty to charges of sexual contact with a person under the age of 16.

While Clorina is expected back in court for sentencing on the sexual contact charge on April 7, no sentencing date has been set on the murder conviction.

The horrific crime gripped Calgarians in 2013. In the immediate aftermath of the discovery of the bodies, support was brought in for the family as well as the officers who responded to the scene.

METRO

Calgary homicide victim Chona Manzano. FACEBOOK

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Foreign workers scramble as time in Canada runs out

APRIL 1 DEADLINE

Those without permanent residency must leave country

Anna Brooks
Metro | Calgary

Time has officially run out for the thousands of temporary foreign workers (TFW) in Alberta who have hit the federal government's four-year cap to work in Canada.

Those without permanent residency have only one option: to leave.

Yash Boodhoo, kitchen manager at Original Joe's in Marda Loop, recently attained permanent residence in Canada, and said he couldn't imagine being forced to return home to the small island of Mauritius near Madagascar.

"It would be a nightmare going back home," Boodhoo said. "If the government told me right now I had to go back, I would be blind. I wouldn't know what to do."

Boodhoo said deportation would mean saying goodbye to the life of stability and security that temporary foreign workers such as he have come to know in Canada. It would also be exceedingly difficult for him to pay off accrued debts and loans.

"Most workers here had to take out loans to pay for work permit fees," Boodhoo said. "When I came here I had to borrow money from my family and the bank. If I had to go back home, I'd have to start from the bottom."

Fellow Original Joe's employee Ian McMahon said workers like Boodhoo have been vital to the establishment's success. With two of the restaurant's five employed temporary foreign workers unable to work as they scramble to get their work permits extended, McMahon said the restaurant has been feeling the effects.

"We've definitely been affected by this recently," McMahon said. "It's tough trying to find guys who work as hard as they do. They are super nice and do a great job, and it's really hard because right now they're just not able to work."

2

Number of temporary foreign workers of 5 at Original Joe's Restaurant who can't work as they try to get permits extended.

Nellie Alcaraz, Calgary coordinator for TFW advocacy group Migrante Alberta, said now that the official April 1 deadline has hit, she has been seeing more and more workers dealing with mental health issues as those without permanent residence head home.

"We've been seeing increasing depression among workers because they are very anxious about their situation," Alcaraz explained. "Before there seemed to be some hope, but now everything has crumbled."

Alcaraz said because so many workers are desperate to stay in Canada, she fears workers will explore the option of staying illegally in Canada. Despite being able to garner funds to support families overseas, she said working illegally would open the floodgates to abusing labour rights.

"We're already foreseeing a lot of workers going underground, but it will bring more problems," Alcaraz said. "Their children can't enrol in school because they have no immigration documents. Employers can dictate their hours and wage and workers can't report any ill treatment for fear of being found out."

Alberta has the second highest number of temporary foreign workers in the country, according to Citizenship and Immigration Canada. While 1,000 workers in Alberta are to be given a one-year visa extension while they wait for their permanent residence applications to be processed, 9,000 other Alberta applicants are left in limbo.

Yash Boodhoo, left, from Mauritius, with Original Joe's co-worker Ian McMahon, has recently attained permanent residency staus and can stay in Canada. ANNA BROOKS/METRO

> **We've been seeing increasing depression among workers because they are very anxious about their situation.**
> Nellie Alcaraz, Migrante Alberta advocacy group

VOLUNTARY TAX

Grass is greener if you pay

Robson Fletcher
Metro | Calgary

Calgary is effectively fostering a two-tiered system of public green space with its voluntary taxation system that allows well off communities to opt for "enhanced" landscaping while other residents go with lesser service or no parks at all, a city councillor said Wednesday.

"Why would parks be delivering enhanced maintenance when we have challenged operating dollars?" said Coun. Evan Woolley.

He noted numerous neighbourhoods in his inner-city Ward 8 have little access to parks, many with minimal maintenance.

Some areas see the grass mowed just twice a year, Woolley said.

That stands in stark contrast, he noted, to the "enhanced" landscaping work — much of it done by city parks staff — in nearly a dozen suburban communities that opt to pay a voluntary "special tax" for the extra service.

In total, 10 communities pay between $37 and $212 per household per year for the extra service, totalling more than $1 million annually.

Todd Reichardt, manager of parks centre division, said the funds are used to hire additional staff to do the enhanced landscaping work.

"It's a golden opportunity for our staff to really expand their horticultural knowledge and horticultural expertise," he said.

To establish the special tax, two-thirds of property owners in a community must sign a petition agreeing to it.

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Best bets

1 THE BOOK OF MORMON

Friday, Jubilee Auditorium:
Created by South Park masterminds Trey Parker and Matt Stone, The Book of Mormon took Broadway by storm when it premiered in 2011. The nine-time Tony Award-winning musical satire follows two young Salt Lake City Mormon missionaries sent to Uganda.

2 PUSH 2015

Friday, C2 in city hall:
The fifth annual PUSH showcase is a student-organized exhibition featuring the works of senior students in the University of Calgary's bachelor of fine arts program. More than 30 emerging artists will be showcased in a variety of mediums, including painting, printmaking, drawing, photography and sculpture.

3 THE IMPROV GAMES — CATCHING FUNDS

Saturday, Festival Hall:
Presented by Obviously Improv, the fundraising event pitches Calgary improv companies against each other in an audience-decided, Hunger Games-style battle of wits and creativity. Money raised will go toward funding arts education.

4 EASTER IN KENSINGTON

Sunday:
The trendy northwest 'hood is celebrating Easter with family-friendly festivities, which include an Easter egg hunt and a Butterfield Acres petting zoo in front of the Plaza Theatre. The Plaza is also hosting a free screening of The Lego Movie in the afternoon. Activities start at noon.

LISA WILTON/FOR METRO

A promotional image from Ex Machina, which makes its Canadian premiere at the Calgary Underground Film Festival. CONTRIBUTED

Film festival going behind the scenes

BACKSTAGE PASS

CUFF begins April 13 and special guests will be in house

Lisa Wilton
Metro | Calgary

For the past 12 years, the Calgary Underground Film Festival has brought the best in independent and cult cinema to local screens.

The 2015 edition will be no different, with 33 feature films from around the world being shown over seven days, starting April 13.

This year, however, CUFF is putting an emphasis on those who work behind the scenes.

Canadian director David Cronenberg's work will be featured in a retrospective, consisting of films shot by cinematographer Mark Irwin, who will be attending the festival.

"We love listening to what our audience is into and what they want to see and we had some recommendations for Cronenberg," says CUFF festival director and lead programmer Brenda Lieberman.

"We all had our favourites, so we made a list and asked Mark to pick his favourites and then chose four."

Lieberman says while the average moviegoer may not know Irwin, he's well respected within film circles.

"We felt that there are a lot of people who work on (Cronenberg's) films who are celebrities in the minds of our local film crews and movie-going community," she says. "We know a lot of lighting and camera guys who are really geeking out over the idea of Mark Irwin coming to town.

"You kind of forget there are a lot of other people putting the film together and a lot of movie fans, in their own nerd way, follow the people behind the scenes."

The festival kicks off with the Canadian premiere of the critically acclaimed U.K. science-fiction romance Ex Machina (director of photography Rob Hardy will also be on hand.)

Other highlights include documentaries on former pro-wrestler Jake (The Snake) Roberts (Resurrection of Jake The Snake) and Vancouver heavy-metal singer Thor (I Am Thor), as well as the popular 48-Hour Movie Competition, which pitches teams against the clock and each other to create a short film.

"It's always been a way for us to work with the local film community and to try to encourage and spawn new filmmakers and productions," Lieberman says.

"That's why we started it anyway. I think everyone likes to do it because it's a fun event; it's not about the prizing or who won."

MORE INFO

For tickets, festival schedule and more about the films being screened, visit calgaryundergroundfilm.org.

MUSIC

Q&A: Laila Biali

Laila Biali is a 34-year-old Canadian jazz and pop musician, based in Brooklyn. Biali cut her teeth playing with celebrated jazz trumpeter Chris Botti and singer Paula Cole. Her new album, House of Many Rooms, comes out April 14 and she performs at the Ironwood Stage on April 15.

Was jazz the first style of music you loved? When did you start playing?

Classical was my first love and I started playing piano when I was four years old. I discovered jazz in my late teen years.

You spent some time playing in the bands of a few established jazz and pop artists. What did you learn from touring with Paula Cole, Suzanne Vega and Sting?

Paula Cole taught me what it looked like to give 150 per cent.

Laila Biali CONTRIBUTED

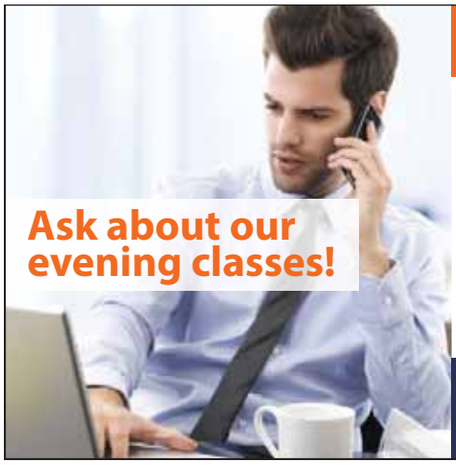
She could be playing in front of a herd of cattle and she'd sing like she was performing at the Grammys. Suzanne Vega showed me the power of understatement. She's the epitome of cool.

Sting taught me about collaboration within the creative process. He maintains control ... but he allows a lot of bending and flexing for individual input.

Your new album is the first one featuring all original songs. Why did you go in a more pop direction on this one?

I think it was because the songs led me in that direction, more than me trying to force the songs into a more mainstream zone.... I tried to incorporate them into my jazz sets, but they didn't quite work.

LISA WILTON/FOR METRO



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The outside of the Calgary Courts Centre can be seen on Saturday. Some legal experts say the new fees outlined in the 2015 Alberta budget could restrict access to justice.
MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Court costs go up for Albertans

JUSTICE

Rise could deter lower-income people from filing

Morgan Modjeski
Metro | Calgary

It's going to cost more for Albertans to go to court, and for some, they may be taking a hit to the wallet even before they get in front of a judge.

Outlined in the Alberta budget was an increase in a number of once-free civil, family and provincial court filings, like a third-party claim or counter-claim, and experts say the new costs could jeopardize a person's access to justice.

Ola Malik, co-chair of the Canadian Bar Association Alberta branch's access to justice committee, said these courts mostly involve regular people and for those who are on the verge of poverty, the impacts could be widespread.

"We're not talking about large companies or large corporations," he said.

"You're essentially talking about normal people trying to resolve their legal issues, and in a time of an economic downturn, people are already facing challenges of being laid off or having to find housing.

"This certainly isn't going to help them. One hundred and fifty dollars in the life of someone who is already struggling to make ends meet can have a real repercussion on the right to access justice."

Wildrose justice critic Shayne Saskiw said his party feels the jump in fees will "deny justice for a lot of individuals."

"I think what's going to happen is people are going to be frustrated with the fees and simply … decide not to have their legal rights upheld on the basis of the costs are just going to be simply too high," he said.

However, Justice Minister Jonathan Denis said the increased fees are needed, as they have gone unadjusted since 1993.

"Realistically, it more accurately reflects the cost of justice," said Denis.

"There's many more costs involved than the fees generated but, at the same time, there has to be some level of cost recovery."

He also noted that there would be a program in place by May 1 when the new fees are implemented to ensure those who cannot afford the fees can have them waived, and with a lower pay system, those who win their cases can recover the filing costs.

Malik said the opportunity to have the fees waived is a positive, but noted the criteria have to be reasonable when it comes to who can qualify to have their fees removed.

"The court process is complicated enough, there are procedural hurdles, you have to go down to a courthouse, it can be very intimidating for people," he said. "We're now throwing up another barrier in terms of them being able to access legal services." THE CANADIAN PRESS

RCMP lay more charges in northern Alberta jail drug smuggling case

A police organized crime and gang unit has charged three more people for planning to smuggle drugs into a northern Alberta jail.

Last year police charged a guard and two others after seizing marijuana, oxycodone pills and methamphetamine that was to be sold in the Peace River Correctional Centre.

On Wednesday RCMP charged former inmate William Blackwood and two others with conspiracy to traffic meth and pot.

Trafficking charges laid last year against Thomas Black, a correctional officer at the facility, are still before the courts.

The others charged in the case include Chantelle McAllister, Robin Wachter, Farrah Hachey and Shauna Cunningham.

Police allege people inside and outside the jail conspired to sell drugs to inmates.

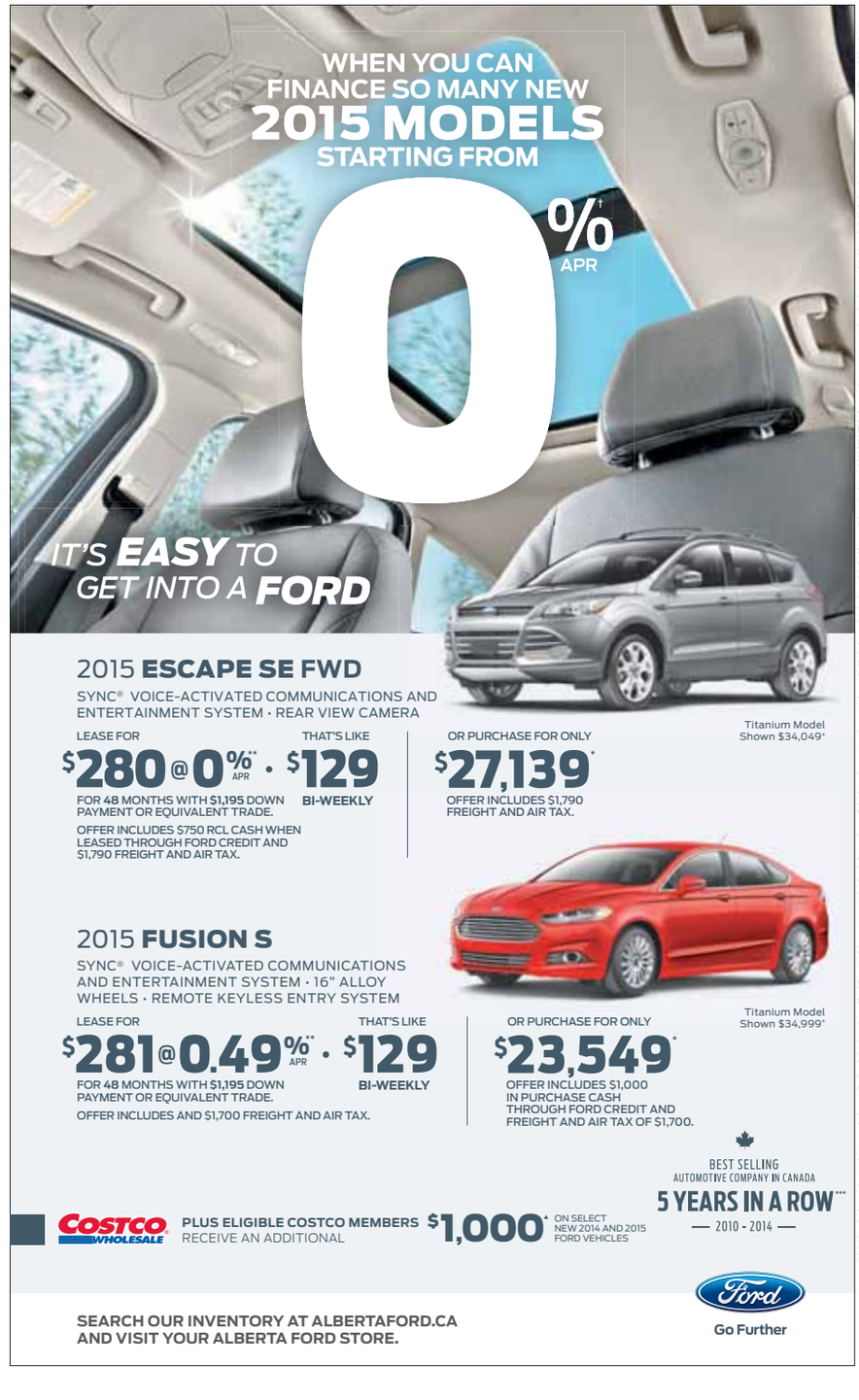
Sgt. Jason Gibson said it is pretty rare for a guard to face such charges.

"We are not blind to the fact that hard drugs are going into our institutions," Gibson said Wednesday.

"I have been doing drug and organized crime work for awhile and it is certainly the first one where me or any of the people in my unit have investigated something like this."

Gibson declined to identify the organized crime group or gang involved in the case.

The Peace River Correctional Centre is a provincial jail that houses about 300 male inmates. THE CANADIAN PRESS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Alt venues try to fill the youth gap

COMMUNITY

Bike store by day, shop plans to offer space to teens at night

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

The Calgary all-ages scene is best manoeuvred online, scrolling through feeds of well-known or unknown occasional venues to find shows. But a selection of community stakeholders are trying to change the local game and bring all-ages venues to the forefront again.

Good Life Bikes, a bike store by day, is trying to become much more at night. It has started offering its space up to teens and kids as a safe place to gather and enjoy music. But it has had troubles with licensing and is finding it tough to nail down a solution that would allow the daytime shop to turn into a venue at night for teens.

Lena Elliott stands in Good Life Bikes where they work by day as a greaser, and by night an event planner. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

"We're working on it; it's not for lack of trying," said Lena Elliott, Good Life Community Bicycle Shop's event co-ordinator.

"We're trying to be more focused on being a Good Life community instead of just a Good Life bike shop.... We just want to be a bike shop by day and have other events at night."

> **"We're working on it; it's not for lack of trying.**
> Lena Elliott

As Metro previously reported, parents say a steady all-ages, all-inclusive venue is hard to find. Most bars and restaurants can use money from liquor sales to offset the cost of equipment and paying a band, which is one of the reasons Calgary event planners say all-ages spaces come and go.

"It's not for profit, so everything goes back into the shop," said Elliott. "We're trying to figure out where we should put our money that's the best place to keep the shop going."

Liam Gordon, co-founder of Tiny Beast Collective, said he's been hosting shows in some capacity for 10 years, hopping from venue to venue.

Although he has found venues for the collective's shows — which have a strict "safe space" policy against drugs, alcohol and bad behaviour — it's still difficult to host in non-traditional spaces without the questioning eye of the authorities.

"There has been a reduction of venues, mostly due to the city, I'd say," Gordon said.

"I think it's licensing or zoning, also the city not understanding the importance of youth culture."

TOO FEW

Venues are rare, but plan to convert venues possible: City planner

City planner Laurie Kimber said these kinds of places are few and far between but added it's within the realm of possibility to work with shops and transform them into venues.

"We have rules in place to manage them and to allow them. It's kind of owner initiated," Kimber said. "As long as we can ensure the health and safety of the users and get some community involvement and manage all aspects of it ... it's great to have places for youth to go, and we have a system that can accommodate them."

Owners can approach the city through licensing or by phoning 311 to describe the plans and get either a special-event permit or a permanent-development permit depending on the situation.

HELEN PIKE/METRO

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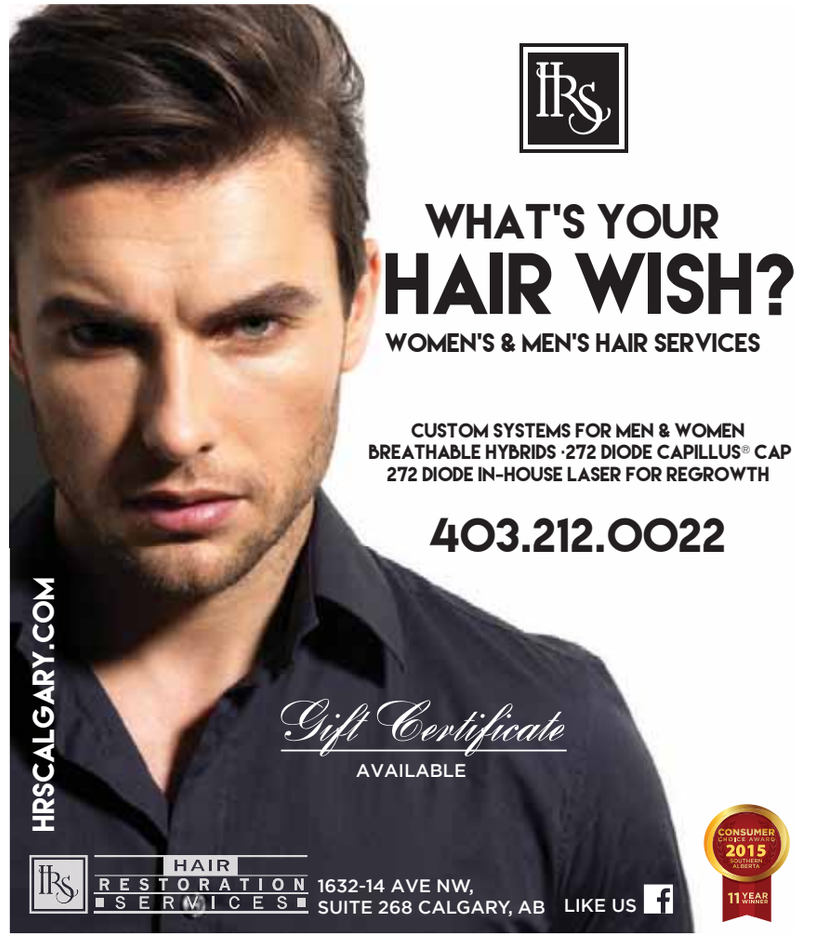

Newer sidewalks 'deteriorating'

INFRASTRUCTURE

But century walkways still going strong, councillor says

Robson Fletcher
Metro | Calgary

While some of Calgary's sidewalks have lasted for more than a century, many more recently built walkways are crumbling well before their time, creating a source of frustration for city officials and developers alike.

"The sidewalks that are being poured, certainly in the last five years, seem to be of poorer quality," Coun. Druh Farrell noted at this week's city council meeting.

Farrell said she was recently walking in the Beltline and noticed a sidewalk slab stamped with its original construction date — 1907 — and wondered how it was still in great shape while newer sidewalks in public places like Memorial Park and in some newly built communities are already failing.

"They're deteriorating far more rapidly than the ones that were poured in 1907 or even up to the past 10 years," Farrell said.

That's "an accurate observation," according to Mac Logan, the city's general manager of transportation.

"This is one of the reasons we get into debates with the development industry about standards," Logan said.

Properly laying the "sub base" beneath a sidewalk and ensuring adequate drainage so it remains dry throughout the seasons is key to it longevity, Logan added, but that doesn't always happen.

In new communities, specifically, Logan said construction-related damage is also a major source of sidewalk failure.

"That's every bit as frustrating for the developers as it is for the city," Logan said. "When I was in that industry, you'd get somebody building a house and a concrete truck would back over to pour a basement and blow the sidewalk apart. Or they'd back across the sidewalk three houses over and come around the back side so you couldn't figure out who did it."

> **"This is going to cost us big money ... I think we need to tighten up our specs."**
> Coun. Druh Farrell

Members of UDI – Calgary, the development industry's main advocacy group, have a term for this. They call it "builder damage."

"Home construction does take a toll on concrete curbs and sidewalks," reads a statement emailed to Metro from UDI CEO Guy Huntingford. "The development industry has a rigorous education program with home builders and sub-trades that is intended to decrease the instance of 'builder damage.' This is difficult to monitor and third-party damage continues to occur."

Coun. Druh Farrell wonders why new sidewalks, like this one along 2 Street SW next to Memorial Park, are falling apart while some built a century ago are still intact. ROBSON FLETCHER / METRO

Huntingford noted the city can compel replacement of obvious damage before construction is deemed complete in a new community and there is also a minimum two-year maintenance period on new concrete during which time developers must repair any damage before the city takes over responsibility.

Farrell, however, said the expected lifespan of new sidewalks should be a lot longer than two years.

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Spruce Meadows reflects on 40 years while looking ahead

CELEBRATION

Operators, volunteers, like one big 'family'

Darren Krause
Metro | Calgary

One of Linda Southern-Heathcott's fondest memories of the past four decades at Spruce Meadows was the aftermath of last September's catastrophic Calgary snowstorm — days before the equestrian facility's crown jewel event, the Masters.

It wasn't the downed trees, the calf-deep snow or the structures under stress, it was how the community came together — regular volunteers, firefighters, the military and average Calgarians alike — to help them recover for their premier event.

"It was a good and bad day … We were really in trouble for our Masters tournament," recalled Southern-Heathcott, Spruce Meadows' president and CEO.

"What really touched me was that so many people came to help us. They shovelled the international ring, twice, by hand, which is five acres, to get us ready.

"It was really special — it really was the Calgary spirit."

That togetherness — the facility's founders talk about a lot of their partners as "family" — was the centrepiece of a celebration at the Spruce Meadows Equi-Plex for the equestrian facility's 40th anniversary launch.

Vice-president Ian Allison said more than 1,000 people gathered for a luncheon that in the 40th year of Spruce Meadows they want to reflect upon the past, enjoy the present and begin to consider the future.

"A lot has changed over 40 years," Allison said. "But, a lot has stayed the same."

Allison mentioned their partners in corporate Calgary and in the media, but he paid special tribute to the many volunteers that had been a cornerstone of their operation since the beginning.

Bob and Esther Laidlaw started volunteering when Spruce Meadows opened in 1975 and did so together for the next 30 years.

They were friends with Spruce Meadows founders Ron and Marg Southern and that's what got them started, but that sense of family kept them coming back.

"All the people and all the volunteers … it makes a heck of a difference," Bob said. "It's just like they said — you're part of the family that works for Spruce Meadows — that enjoys working at Spruce Meadows."

Bob said the chance to come out and help put on the show and to build camaraderie with others who enjoy Spruce Meadows is a big draw for volunteers of all ages.

And that's what Spruce Meadows is hoping for in its 40th season.

Southern-Heathcott said while more than 500,000 people join them for events throughout the year, they want to reach out to more Calgarians — especially ones who are new to the city.

"When we first opened Calgary had just over 300,000 people — and now it's 1.3 million," she said.

"We want to reach the new Calgarians and let them know that in these difficult times this is a respite — they can come and enjoy it — there's lots for them to do."

Tank tribute
In a tribute heralding the relationship between the Southern family, Spruce Meadows and the Canadian Military, members of the Lord Strathcona's Horse Mounted Regiment will have a 42-ton Leopard I tank relocated to the Spruce Meadows grounds. Further, they broke from military tradition in naming their tanks in names starting with the letters A, B, C or D, and will name one of their new Leopard II tanks Southern, after the founding family.

Founders Plaza
This will be one of the largest improvements coming to Spruce Meadows this season. The plaza will be unveiled later in 2015 and will pay homage to the people, businesses and other partners who have supported Spruce Meadows for the past four decades.

More than 1,000 people joined the Southern family at the Spruce Meadows Equi-Plex Wednesday to celebrate the equestrian facility's 40th anniversary. Spruce Meadows is aiming to reach more Calgarians to join their events. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

DETAILS

The facility sits on roughly 550 acres on the southwest edge of Calgary near the community of Silverado.

While primarily a show-jumping facility, over the years they've developed a wide range of low-cost activities for people of all ages.

There are 14 major events each year at Spruce Meadows — six outdoor and eight indoor events.

Athletes from 57 nations have competed at the equestrian events.

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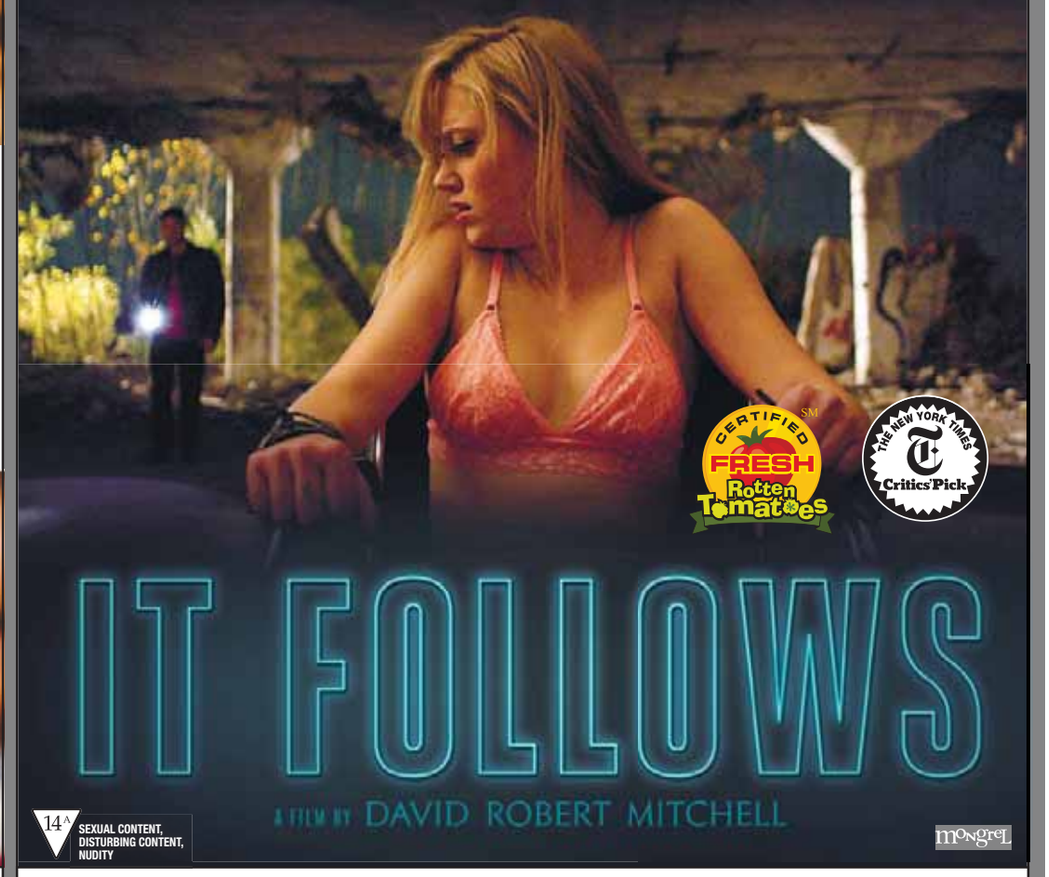
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WINTER STORM DESTRUCTION

Tree planting program more vital than ever

A Calgary tree planting program, still standing after years of support, takes on a more pressing call for participation after a snowstorm ripped through the city in September, felling over 50 per cent of the tree population.

Neighbourwoods is an inexpensive way for Calgarians to plant trees on city property while learning about how to care for the important greenery. The program, which usually serves about 10 neighbourhoods selected for need and interest, will be expanded this year to 25 neighbourhoods — as a response to the staggering September tree loss.

"The city digs the hole for them, we provide a 45-minute education session on how to care for the tree, and some information on general tree health," said Erin Brown, program adviser with the Calgary parks department. "All we ask from the resident is that they plant the tree and also that they water it for almost five years."

Although usually the city aims to get 300-500 trees planted as part of the Neighbourwoods program, this year the goal is around 1,800. Over the next few years, the city will engage Calgarians to help plant over 8,000 new trees.

Brown said we're not out of the woods yet, it could take years to replenish the population, but participation in planting programs is key to helping bring back some of the lost greenery to Calgary. HELEN PIKE/METRO

TO NOTE

Registration details
To see if your neighbourhood is eligible and register for the program visit calgary.ca and search Neighbourwoods

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Staff Sgt. Kristie Verheul with the Calgary Police Service's Economic Crimes Unit tells reporters was seized by police during a recent bust at a credit card counterfeiting lab. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Police bust counterfeit operation

GROWING CONCERN

Officers say credit card fraud labs are on the rise

Jeremy Nolais
Metro | Calgary

Credit card counterfeiting labs are a growing problem in the city of Calgary, police say.

Officers announced charges Wednesday against a man in relation to a credit card and identification counterfeiting operation in the city's southeast following a month-long investigation by its Economic Crimes Unit fraud team. Officers executed a search warrant on March 26 in the 0-100 block of Mahogany Heath SE. Inside, they found bundles of blank credit cards, blank identification cards, an electronic card printer, counterfeit credit cards and an electronic scanning device.

Staff Sgt. Kristie Verheul said these types of crimes are becoming more common in the city.

"What I can tell you in relation to seizures like this with credit card lab equipment is that it's usually not one person. It's a group of two or more people," she said, noting these types of operations can be considered organized crime.

Officers said they believe the items seized were used to produce fake IDs and credit cards, which would then be used for other criminal activities.

Police also noted personal information, which had been skimmed or collected on a previous occasion, was also found imprinted on numerous blank credit cards and gift cards, which Verheul said were available for purchase online.

Andriy Volodymyrovich Plyusnin, 28, of Calgary is facing numerous fraud charges including three counts of fraud under $5,000, possession of government seals and possession of manufacturing equipment.

IN BRIEF

Province acts on fentanyl overdoses by expanding naloxone program
Alberta is dramatically increasing access to anti-opiod naloxone to deal with a troubling spike in fentanyl overdoses across the province. Dr. James Talbot, the province's chief medical officer of health, announced the expansion Wednesday. "This is a first step and we're going to do our best to try and prevent as many of these deaths as possible," he said. Over the last four years, fentanyl overdoses in Alberta have skyrocketed, from just six in 2011 to a troubling 120 last year. Naloxone works as an antidote for opioid drug overdoses. According to the province, the Streetworks programs in Calgary and in Edmonton will help deliver the naloxone where it's needed. RYAN TUMILITY/METRO

Ken Skoreyko flew to Thailand on Dec. 17, 2014 to get back surgery at the BNH Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand. CONTRIBUTED

Albertans go abroad for surgery

HEALTH

AHS says wait times have been reduced by four weeks

Jennifer Friesen
For Metro

In June 2013, Harold Stumpf was at a clinic in Red Deer, paying $1,100 out of pocket for his MRI to avoid the 12 to 24 week wait. As he waited, he felt someone brush against him and whisper the name of a website.

He turned in time to see a hair net and a hand covering a name tag before the person – who he believed to be an employee at the clinic – disappeared, but the words never left Stumpf's mind.

He visited the website, and then the company behind it: North American Spine, based out of Dallas, Texas, which uses a technology called AccuraScope to enter the spine from a three-millimetre natural opening in the tailbone.

On Aug. 22, 2013, Stumpf underwent the 39-minute procedure at Victory Medical Center in Dallas. His medical bill was $14,100 and he was on a flight back to Calgary the next day.

"The minute I stepped off that table, I knew my life had changed," he said.

North American Spine has attracted hundreds of Canadian patients looking for the same procedure, and has also attracted criticism for its aggressive advertising and what some have described in the U.S. as its exaggerated claims.

Nevertheless, the company is popular among Canadians, particularly those hailing from this province. Of 217 Canadians it has treated, North American Spine said 164 came from Alberta.

Timothy Wilson, a spokesperson for Alberta Health, said that from Jan. 2014 to Jan. 2015, the average wait times for back procedures in the province had been reduced by nearly four weeks.

He added that reducing wait times is "an important topic for Albertans."

"We need to do better," Wilson told Metro in an email. "Improving access is one of our top priorities right now."

While Ken Skoreyko was recovering from his back surgery in Thailand, his father, Tom, said that while Alberta's health-care system may work for some, when it comes to surgery, "it's a disaster."

Tom wrote letters to AHS and numerous other politicians asking for an explanation.

He never received a response.

"They don't care," said Ken.

"These are the people running the health-care system, and I'm not happy. If I have any more problems I'll be right on a plane going right back (to Thailand), I won't even fool around."

SEX TRADE

Police to pursue johns online, chief says

Robson Fletcher
Metro | Calgary

Vice officers will adapt to changing times and technologies in an ongoing effort to eliminate prostitution in Calgary, the city's police chief told members of city council Wednesday.

"We have that in-house expertise," interim chief Paul Cook told the city's protective services committee, during a discussion of how sex-trade transactions have moved increasingly online.

"Our vice unit will continually investigate and surveil ... Internet sites to work toward the elimination of prostitution within our community," Cook added.

All officers are adapting to the "complexities" of modern law enforcement, the chief said, and, where necessary, members of the police service's tech crimes unit are called in to assist officers in other units.

While prostitution complaints are down, Cook said police recognize that many of the transactions are now simply happening online and indoors, rather than in public places.

Dixie Baum of the Servants Anonymous Society of Calgary, a group that helps women exit the sex trade, told Metro earlier this week that demand for prostitution has not decreased in the city.

Coun. Evan Woolley said a particularly notorious strip of 15 Avenue in the Beltline is seeing fewer sex-trade transactions happen on the street, but much of the activity is still happening indoors on those same blocks.

"There's lots of those apartment buildings that that online activity is happening in and it's actually flowing out onto the streets," Woolley said, adding he encourages area residents "to report, report, report" if they see any illegal activity.

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Mount Royal University President David Docherty is seen at a campus town hall earlier this year focusing on past cuts to post-secondary education. METRO FILE

No program cuts for MRU: President

EDUCATION

Province's plan to split funding cuts over two years 'helpful'

Jeremy Nolais
Metro | Calgary

More modest cuts to post-secondary likely mean a city university hammered hard in the past will be able to keep its slate of programs intact this year.

David Docherty, president of Calgary's Mount Royal University, said he was more pleased with the approach by the province to trim 1.4 per cent from Campus Alberta grants this year and another 2.7 per cent next year.

"We had said all along if there are going to be cuts, don't bury us the way you did a couple years ago with (7.3 per cent) — give us a bit more time," he said. "The fact these will take place over two years, I think is helpful."

The 7.3 per cent cut came in the 2013 budget and led to Mount Royal eliminating eight programs as well as dozens of staff positions.

Asked if more programs could be on the chopping block this year, Docherty responded, "It's certainly not in our game plan."

"We're looking at numbers, but certainly we came into this saying program protection is our No. 1 priority and nothing that was announced (Thursday) changes that," he said.

Students at Mount Royal are in line to pay more next year, as the university will hike its services fee by 65 per cent to $200 a semester. Mount Royal also has yet to decide whether it will implement approved market-modification tuition hikes in business administration, nursing and science.

Docherty, meanwhile, said his institution needed more information before weighing in on a potential shift in Alberta's post-secondary sector, one that could see schools rely less heavily on provincial grants.

"We think the province should invest in education because the province gets a huge return on that investment," he said. "We also think students should invest in their education because it's not just tuition, it's an investment in their future. The trick is to make sure that (return on investment) is not offset by debt that stops that ROI from happening very soon."

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Romeo and Juliet with more choices

STAGE

Production lets audience choose storyline

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Romeo and Juliet doesn't always have to be a tragedy, especially in the hands of an audience eager to save the star-crossed lovers from their relationship's poisoned fate.

A production of Romeo & Juliet Choose Your Own Ending by Mount Royal University's JuiceBox Theatre will do just that, allow the audience to vote over eight separate storyline outcomes, and change the structure of one of the most recognized Shakespearean tragedies.

"It can change either completely, or hardly at all, because we have the original ending in the path." said Brittany Dorozio, president of the theatre group. "There can be an ending where none of the same characters live that do in the original."

Dorozio, who plays Benvolio, said working on the production was like learning eight different plays. The team of nine actors practised three or four times a week for three months.

This is one instance where no two performances are the same. The cast hopes to perform each storyline at least once, and don't want any sort of repeats, but it's not up to the actors, they're just there to count votes and put on a show.

"It depends on the audience and who's there; if we have one performance one night we will probably try to sway it a different way for the next performance," she said.

Although there is a modern twist the audience can still expect some classic Shakespearean elements.

The production begins Thursday at the John Dutton Theatre. Tickets are $10 and can be purchased at the door. Although the play is a familiar one, some language makes this performance inappropriate for young ears — it's up to parental discretion.

For more information visit facebook.com/juicebox.theatre.

Lord Capulet, Emily Thwaites left and Lord Montague, Andrea Roberts stand back to back in full costume ready to perform JuiceBox Theatre's production of Romeo & Juliet Choose Your Own Ending. EMILY THWAITES/CONTRIBUTED

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CRIME

Canadian diplomat's son killed in shooting

One teenage son of a Miami-based Canadian diplomat was killed and a younger son is under arrest after they were involved in an alleged drug deal that turned into a gun battle, according to police records and the diplomat's ex-husband.

Germano Wabafiyebazu said Wednesday his 17-year-old son, Jean, was killed when he went into a house to buy marijuana, and that police arrested his 15-year-old son.

Wabafiyebazu was formerly married to the boys' mother, Canadian consul general Roxanne Dubé.

The Miami Police Department would not comment on the shootings. The Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office confirmed that another man, 19-year-old Anthony Rodriguez, was charged with second-degree murder and marijuana possession with intent to sell for his alleged role.

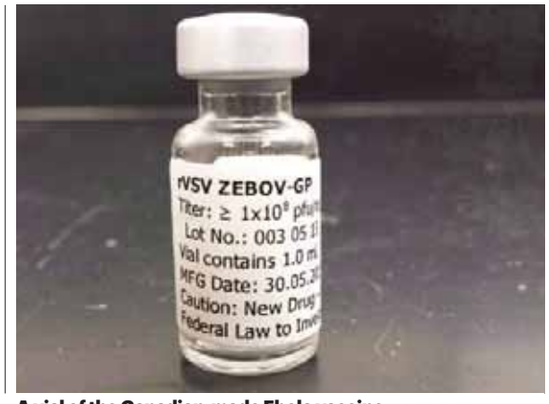
The Rodriguez arrest report says a second man was shot to death inside the house, but he was not identified.

The police report also quotes unidentified witnesses as saying Rodriguez brought two pounds of marijuana to the house and began to negotiate.

In addition, the 15-year-old faces charges of threatening a police officer while in custody, according to a separate police report. That report also briefly refers to a gunfight in which Jean Wabafiyebazu was killed.

Germano Wabafiyebazu said his sons borrowed their mother's personal vehicle which has diplomatic licence plates, to drive to the house but told their mother they were just going for a drive. He said he was told that Marc rushed into the house after hearing a gunshot.

Dubé started her job as consul general in Miami in February. She was previously Canada's ambassador to Zimbabwe from 2005 to 2008 and also served as a staff member for a Canadian Liberal cabinet minister for over a decade. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



A vial of the Canadian-made Ebola vaccine. CONTRIBUTED

Phase 1 trials suggest Ebola vaccine is safe

HEALTH

Drug quickly generates antibodies in recipients

The first human trials of a designed-in-Canada Ebola vaccine suggest it is safe and triggers a rapid immune response, two articles published Wednesday reveal.

The work, based on six clinical trials in the United States, Switzerland, Germany, Gabon and Kenya, found the vaccine quickly generates antibodies in people who receive it.

Whether those antibodies protect against infection remains to be seen, but early evidence suggests that is a strong possibility.

The vaccine is called rVSV-ZEBOV and was created by scientists at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, part of the Public Health Agency of Canada. It is being developed by U.S. biotech NewLink Genetics and pharma giant Merck.

Published in the New England Journal of Medicine, the articles describe Phase 1 clinical trials which represent the first time this vaccine was given to a number of people. The two U.S. trials are reported in one article while the other presents findings from the European and African research.

Phase 1 trials are designed to show if an experimental product is safe and to help determine what an appropriate dose should be.

They are too small to answer the question: Does this vaccine work? It is hoped the answer will come from larger Phase 3 trials currently underway in West Africa.

Volunteers who were vaccinated started to generate antibodies quickly. That is an attractive feature in a vaccine that would be used to quell future Ebola outbreaks, if it makes it through the licensing process.

By Day 28, all the vaccinated volunteers had shown an antibody response. A total of 190 participants received the vaccine in the six studies combined.

The article reporting on data from the European and African trials revealed that blood from vaccinated subjects contained neutralizing antibodies — the type that can kill Ebola viruses.

This finding adds weight to the belief that the vaccine should protect against infection. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CRIME

Mounties dismantle huge prostitution ring

As many as 500 Asian women were allegedly smuggled into the country to take part in a Canada-wide prostitution ring the RCMP says it has dismantled. Federal authorities announced Wednesday they hawd struck against two major cells of the network in the last five days and arrested six people in the greater Montreal and Toronto areas. The accused are allegedly part of an Asian-based organized crime ring that operated bawdy houses in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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THE CITY OF CALGARY

Ship hits bottom near coast of N.L.

Icebreaker took on some water, but no one was injured

The coast guard plans to take some non-essential personnel off the icebreaker Ann Harvey, which struck a rocky shoal Wednesday morning and punctured its hull off the coast of southwest Newfoundland.

Coast guard Capt. Jim Chmiel said the ship is anchored nine kilometres southwest of Burgeo and is not in danger of sinking.

No injuries were reported among the 26 crew members and two cadets who were on board. The coast guard says that all personnel were safe.

Chmiel said it plans to remove the two cadets and as many as four non-essential crew members from the Ann Harvey.

The other crew members will remain on board the ship as it waits for the arrival of the Canadian Coast Guard Ship Louis S. St-Laurent, which will tow it to a sheltered harbour for repairs, said Chmiel, the superintendent of the coast guard's regional operations centre.

The ship took on water in the propulsion motor room and two electrical motors are damaged, he said. Pumps were keeping up with the flow of water coming into the damaged compartments and Chmiel said the situation was "stabilized" early Wednesday evening.

DETAILS

The Ann Harvey was built in Halifax in 1987 and can carry 47 people.

"The water is not rising any more and the (pumps) are keeping up to the inflow of water," he said. "We're just waiting for a large ship to tow it away to a safe haven."

The coast guard said it is coordinating its efforts with the military's Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Halifax.

Once the Louis S. St-Laurent arrives, it will be on standby until another ship, the Teleost, arrives around noon on Thursday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

The coast guard says the Ann Harvey struck a rocky shoal on Wednesday southwest of Burgeo, N.L., but the crew of 26 on board is safe. CANADIAN COAST GUARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Tory senator displeased with expense audit process, findings

Senator Nancy Ruth speaks at a news conference in Ottawa on Dec. 16, 2010. Ruth is miffed that she's being asked to justify claiming a meal expense while travelling when she could have eaten a free airline breakfast. SEAN KILPATRICK /THE CANADIAN PRESS

POLITICS

Questions not about 'Senate business,' Nancy Ruth says

Conservative Sen. Nancy Ruth appears to have little faith in the ability of the auditor general to figure out whether she and her colleagues were inappropriately billing taxpayers for expenses.

"Most of their questions were not very sophisticated, nor do they really have anything to do with Senate business," she told reporters Wednesday morning about her experience having employees for the federal watchdog comb through her travel expense claims as part of a large-scale forensic investigation into Senate reimbursements.

"There are a couple of times when my assistant put in for a breakfast when I was on a plane and they say I should not claim because I should have eaten that breakfast. Well, those (free) breakfasts are pretty awful. If you want ice-cold Camembert with broken crackers …" Nancy Ruth said.

"I just don't think they understand anything of what it's like to fly around the world to get here. They just don't know," she said.

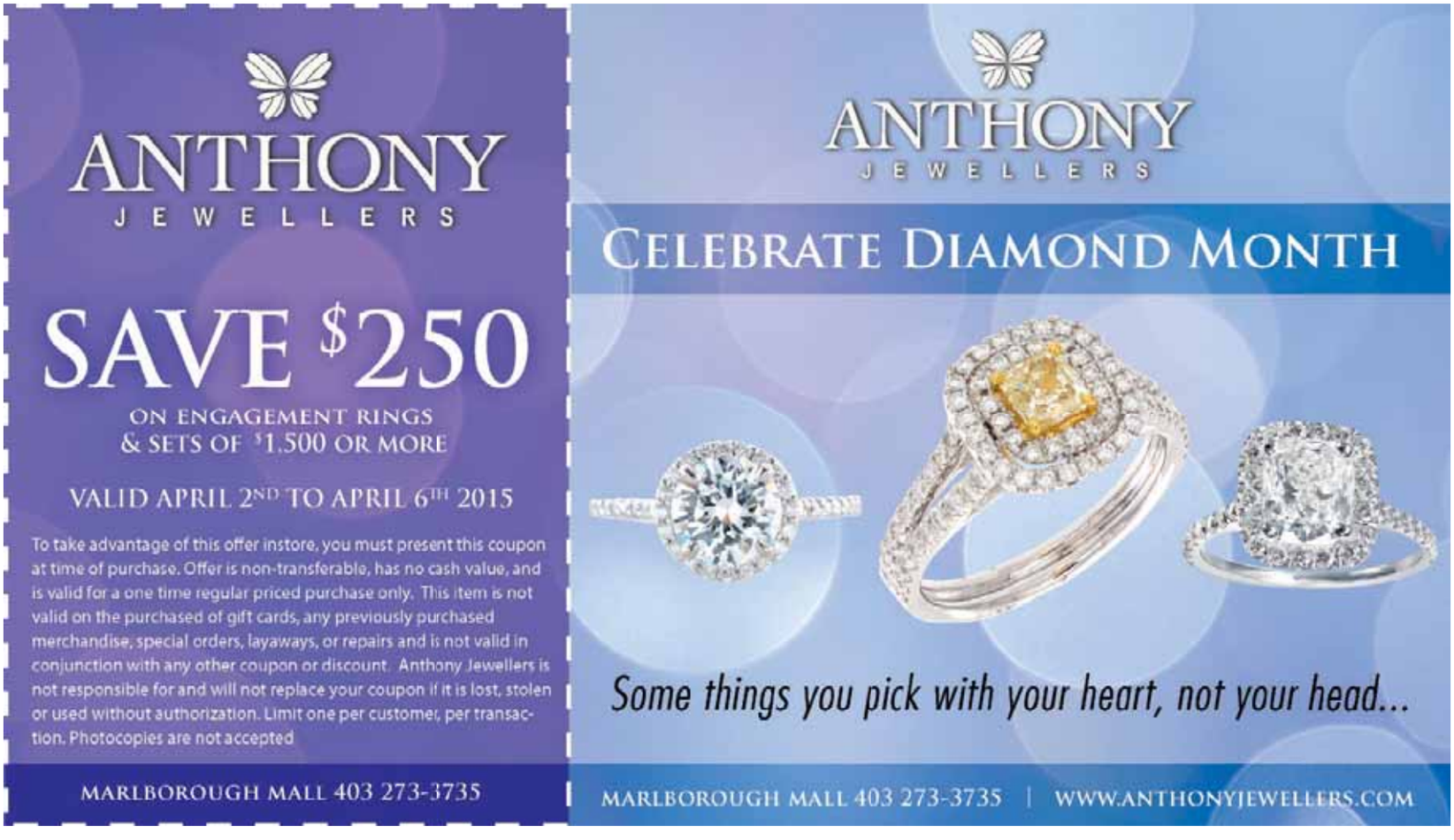
> **Most of their questions were not very sophisticated …**
> Senator Nancy Ruth

The Conservative senator for Ontario was responding to a report by CTV News Tuesday night that dozens of senators have received letters from the Office of the Auditor General asking them to account for questionable claims.

A sourced confirmed to Torstar News Service on Wednesday that at least 44 senators have received such letters and that one of them is former Liberal senator Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, who was asked to explain some $100,000 in claims. CTV News also said at least one senator has already paid back a claim flagged by auditors.

NDP MP Charlie Angus, the ethics critic for his party, dismissed the notion that the auditor general is being too strict by questioning senators over why they claimed per-diems for meals they could have eaten free on airplanes as well as at receptions and other Senate-related gatherings.

"I think what Canadians are smart enough to know is here is a bunch of whiny senators trying to deflect attention from the fact that they have had no oversight, no accountability, so they are trying to pretend that this huge number that has been racked up is because they had some sandwiches at meetings. I don't buy that," Angus said Wednesday. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Quebec to continue to support Badawi despite criticism

Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Canada is telling Quebec politicians his government won't accept meddling in its internal affairs in response to the case of a jailed blogger.

The ambassador sent a letter addressed to the Speaker of the national assembly regarding Raif Badawi, saying his government expresses "its strong surprise and dismay" at what is being said and written about the case.

Badawi was sentenced to 10 years in prison, 1,000 lashes and fined for criticizing Saudi Arabian clerics. The first 50 lashes were carried out in early January, but he has not been flogged since.

The March 10 letter was also sent to the federal government and is critical of attacks by media and international agencies on Saudi Arabia's human rights record.

"(The kingdom) does not accept any form of interference in its internal affairs and rejects the encroachment on its sovereign right or the compromising of its judiciary independence and integrity," writes Naif Bin Bandir AlSudairy.

Quebec Immigration Minister Kathleen Weil said Wednesday her government will continue to champion Badawi's cause as well as challenge other human rights abuses around the world.

"We want Raif Badawi to be released from prison and to be able to come here and live with his wife and his children," Weil said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

TRAVEL BAN

Fahmy left shocked by Ottawa's refusal to give him passport

A Canadian journalist on trial in Egypt on widely denounced terror charges expressed shock and anger Wednesday over Ottawa's refusal to issue him a passport while he awaits the outcome of his case.

Mohamed Fahmy, who was born in Egypt but immigrated to Canada with his family as a teenager, said his original Canadian passport was seized by Egyptian authorities when he was first arrested in Cairo in December 2013, and has never been returned.

The 40-year-old, who spent more than a year in a Cairo prison, has been trying to acquire a new passport ever since being released on bail in February.

"I am crippled and it's becoming a security threat that I'm walking around with no Canadian passport," he said in an interview from Cairo.

"I don't know what to do anymore."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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New device makes walking easier

WEARABLE ROBOTICS

It has no motor but a spring to store and release energy

Engineers have come up with a motor-free device to make walking more efficient and easier — something scientists once thought couldn't be done.

The prototype exoskeleton boot runs from just below the knee to the ankle, and when you strap on a pair, you can reduce the energy it takes to walk by seven per cent. That means you won't burn as many calories.

It's wearable robotics without a motor or a power source. The one-pound device relies instead on a spring to store energy and release it with each step, and a clutch that engages the spring at the proper moment. The device is a little too bulky to fit under pants legs or socks.

"It doesn't look too bad. Looks kind of flashy," said Carnegie Mellon University engineering professor Steven Collins, lead author of a study published Wednesday in the journal Nature. "When you first put them on, it feels a little bit odd, then after a few minutes you don't really notice it very much."

With an obese nation, making exercise burn fewer calories may not seem like the best idea, but it's not as crazy as it sounds, Collins said.

Studies show that when walking or biking becomes harder, people do it less. So maybe if it becomes easier, people will do it more and burn more calories in the long run, Collins said.

This sort of hydraulic cast could also boost the development of other exoskeleton devices, perhaps for the hips.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An exoskeleton boot seen in Pittsburgh. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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YEMEN SAUDI-LED AIRSTRIKES TARGET SHIITE REBELS ACROSS YEMEN; 35 KILLED
A Houthi Shiite rebel carries his weapon as he joins others to protest against Saudi-led airstrikes, during a rally in Sanaa, Yemen, Wednesday. Saudi-led coalition warplanes bombed Shiite rebel positions in both north and south Yemen early Wednesday, setting off explosions and drawing return fire from anti-aircraft guns. HANI MOHAMMED/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISIL

Iraq declares victory in Tikrit

The Iraq government declared victory in Tikrit on Wednesday over ISIL extremists, and it warned the militants holding other Iraqi provinces that they would be the next to fall.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi walked triumphantly along a street in Tikrit, carrying an Iraqi flag and surrounded by jubilant forces.

Across the border in Syria, however, ISIL fighters made their deepest foray yet into the capital of Damascus by infiltrating a Palestinian refugee camp, according to opposition activists and Palestinian officials.

Iraq's victory over the extremists in Tikrit was seen as a key step toward eventually driving the militants out of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city and the capital of Nineveh province.

Defence Minister Khalid al-Obeidi announced the victory, saying security forces have "accomplished their mission" in the monthlong offensive to rid Saddam Hussein's hometown and the broader Salahuddin province of the militant group.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fire engulfs Mexican oil rig; 4 workers dead

OIL

No evidence yet of major spill: Pemex

A massive ball of flames engulfed an oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico on Wednesday, killing four people and sending terrified workers jumping into the sea.

State-run oil company Petroleos Mexicanos, or Pemex, said there was no evidence yet of a major oil spill following the blast, which injured 16 workers, two seriously, and forced the evacuation of 300.

Fleets of helicopters ferried workers with bandaged hands and faces, and burn marks on their overalls to the nearby city of Ciudad del Carmen, where crowds of concerned relatives of oil workers thronged outside hospitals.

A survivor of the blaze on the shallow-water Abkatun Permanente platform in the Campeche Sound said workers "jumped into the sea out of desperation and panic."

"There was nothing you could do but run," said Roger Arias Sanchez, an employee of Pemex contractor Cotemar who escaped the burning platform in an evacuation boat.

Eight firefighting boats were trying to extinguish the fire, said Pemex. Mexico's Energy Security Agency said the fire "is being extinguished."

President Enrique Pena Nieto said the causes of the accident are under investigation.

Pena said he had issued orders "to carry out the appropriate investigations to find whoever is responsible, but above all, to avoid this type of accident in the future."

On its Twitter account Wednesday afternoon, Pemex raised the death toll from one to four. Many of the injured appeared to be Cotemar employees. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This frame grab of a video from news station Noticias Ciudad del Carmen shows a fire burning at an oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico. NOTICIAS CIUDAD DEL CARMEN VIA APTN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Trial to focus on online bullying

SAN JOSE, CALIF.

Opening statements expected to start next week

A 15-year-old girl committed suicide a week after three classmates photographed themselves sexually assaulting her at a 2012 party, petrified the boys would circulate the photos online and believing gossip about her was spreading widely.

Audrie Pott's story has captivated those concerned with teen bullying, which appears to be on the rise with the help of smartphones and social media but rarely ends in suicide.

A wrongful-death trial this month in San Jose, Calif., will determine whether bullying played a role in the girl's death. Lawyers were to argue Wednesday over what evidence the jury will hear, while opening statements are expected to start next week.

The three boys, now high-school seniors, and other teens are expected to deliver uncomfortable and emotional testimony about the party where Audrie was sexually assaulted after passing out drunk and other events leading up to her death.

Sheila Pott with a portrait of her daughter Audrie in Los Altos, Calif. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Parry Aftab, a digital-privacy lawyer, said Audrie's death likely will be discussed at an international anti-bullying conference in Ireland in May that she's helping organize.

"Depending on what the jury decides, the kids will look at this and see there may be consequences," Aftab said.

Audrie's parents say the assault and fear of online ridicule caused her death and they have pursued a wrongful-death lawsuit against the boys, their families and others for three years that will culminate with the three-week trial.

Her parents say they want to hold the boys responsible and call attention to bullying, social-media shaming and teen suicide. One of the three teens told attorneys that in the weeks before Audrie's death, the trio swapped racy selfies of girls they badgered into taking the photos.

> **"Depending on what the jury decides, the kids will look at this and see there may be consequences."**
> Parry Aftab, digital-privacy lawyer

That boy and his family recently apologized to the Pott family and settled their portion of the case for an amount of money a judge has ordered be kept confidential. But the other two teens insist they weren't responsible for Audrie's death.

The Pott family's lawyer said that the "majority" of proceeds from the lawsuit will be donated to the Audrie Pott Foundation and used to lobby for anti-bullying laws.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Egypt, Nigeria led world in 2014 death sentences

Egypt and Nigeria accounted for well over 1,000 of the death sentences announced last year, more than a third of the world's total, Amnesty International says in its latest annual report on the death penalty. The human-rights group expressed alarm at the 28 per cent jump in death sentences: 2,466 people in 55 countries were condemned to death in 2014.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

New president vows to hunt Boko Haram

Nigerians celebrated Muhammadu Buhari's victory in presidential elections Wednesday, but sobering challenges confront their new leader: from an Islamic uprising to widespread poverty. Buhari, 72, made history in Africa's most populous country as the first opposition candidate to win elections, defeating President Goodluck Jonathan. Buhari warned Boko Haram insurgents he'd be coming after them.

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How do you balance safety with having a good night out?
Well, I don't do it on my own. We have a really good team here and we bounce situations off of each other all the time. We communicate with each other in regards to people who are here
Have you noticed a change in the service industry since you started?
The people seem more responsible and it's just a better environment for everybody. For myself it's safer, leaving at night. I don't have to worry when I leave to go to my car. I also don't have to worry that I'm potentially going to let someone leave who could be a danger to themselves or anybody else.

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Arkansas governor urges fixing religious-objection measure

GAY RIGHTS

Proposed state law has faced strong backlash

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The governor of Arkansas on Wednesday called for changes to a religious objection measure that has faced a backlash from businesses and gay rights groups.

Gov. Asa Hutchinson, a Republican, said the proposed law wasn't intended to sanction discrimination based on sexual orientation, as critics have claimed.

Nonetheless, the governor said he wants changes to the bill lawmakers sent him, prohibiting state and local government from infringing upon someone's religious beliefs without a compelling interest. Hutchinson said he wants the legislature to either recall the bill or pass a followup measure to make the proposal more closely mirror a 1993 federal religious freedom law.

Hutchinson had initially supported the bill and on Tuesday his office had said he planned to sign it into law.

But by Wednesday, his position had changed. After Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signed a similar measure last week, Pence and fellow Republicans endured days of sharp criticism. The Indiana governor is now seeking followup legislation to address concerns that the law could allow businesses to discriminate based on sexual orientation.

Neither the Indiana nor Arkansas law specifically mentions gays and lesbians, but opponents are concerned that their language could offer a legal defence to businesses and other institutions that refuse to serve gays, such as caterers, florists or photographers with religious objections to same-sex marriage.

Supporters insist the law will only give religious objectors a chance to bring their case before a judge.

Similar proposals have been introduced in more than a dozen states. Nineteen other states have similar laws on the books.

Conservative lawmakers have proposed the religious-protection laws as gay marriage advanced rapidly across America, an attempt to shield people from private discrimination lawsuits if they felt that doing business with same-sex couples violated their religious beliefs. Echoing the reaction to Indiana's law, Hutchinson has faced pressure from the state's top employers, including retail giant Wal-Mart, which complained that the measure was discriminatory and would stifle economic development. Little Rock's mayor, the city's Chamber of Commerce and Arkansas-based data services company Acxiom all urged the governor to reject the measure in recent days.

Other big names in business, including Apple, Gap and Levi Strauss, have also spoken out against the religious-objection measures.

Experts say companies are increasingly concerned about any laws that could alienate customers, hurt state economies or limit employers' ability to attract and retain talent.

Arkansas-based Wal-Mart Stores Inc. is particularly influential because it is the world's largest retailer and the largest private employer in the U.S. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN INDIANA

State faces opposition

The state of Indiana faces a possible economic hit as businesses and organizations are cancelling events and barring travel. The band Wilco won't play a May 7 concert in Indianapolis. Comedian Nick Offerman and wife, comic Megan Mullally, said they'll donate proceeds from an appearance Wednesday. The list of cities and states banning government travel continues to grow. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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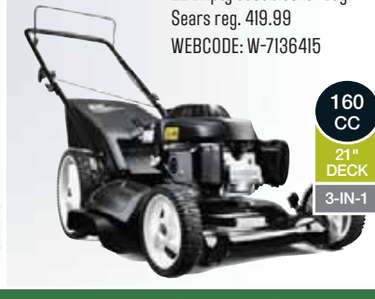

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Sears

New wave of GMOs could be on way

FOOD

Firms hope health benefits will attract customers

With recent government approval of potatoes that don't bruise and apples that don't brown, a new generation of genetically modified foods is headed to grocery shelves.

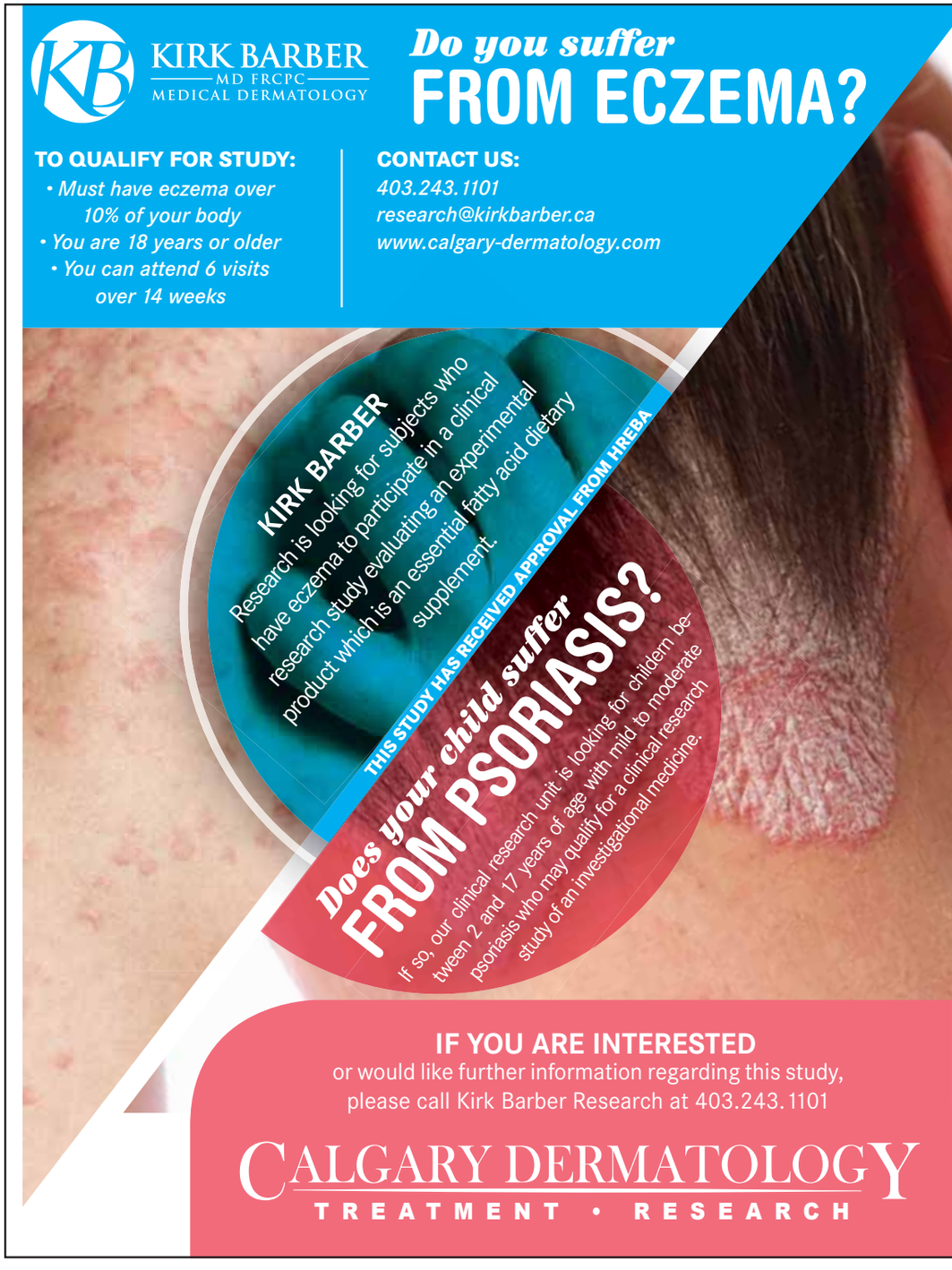
What could be next? Cancer-fighting pink pineapples, heart-healthy purple tomatoes and less fatty vegetable oils, among other products, could receive government approval in the coming years. The companies and scientists that have created these foods are hoping that customers will be attracted to the health benefits and convenience and overlook any concerns about genetic engineering.

"I think once people see more of the benefits they will become more accepting of the technology," says Michael Firko, who oversees the Agriculture Department's regulation of genetically modified organisms, or GMOs.

Critics aren't so sure. They say there should be more thorough regulation of modified foods, which are grown from seeds engineered in labs. The Agriculture Department has the authority only to oversee plant health relative to GMOs, and seeking Food and Drug Administration's safety approval is generally voluntary. "Many of these things can be done through traditional breeding," says Doug Gurian-Sherman of the advocacy group Center for Food Safety.

Cathleen Enright of the Biotechnology Industry Organization says the industry worries that opposition will slow development. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This image provided by The John Innes Centre, U.K., shows a salad made with red and purple tomatoes. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS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REAL ESTATE

Designer labels draw luxury home buyers

The wow factor for Miami's skyscraper condos no longer comes from a dazzling Atlantic Ocean view.

It takes something more audacious to sell beachfront property these days to the global ultra-wealthy who arrive in Miami with millions to spend on second or third homes. It takes words invested with meaning in the language of the international jet set: Porsche. Giorgio Armani. Fendi.

With a slew of residential and hotel developments, Miami is embracing the notion that homes, like cars, handbags and jewelry, should carry luxe designer labels. The trend has spread from Europe, Asia and the Middle East, where developers discovered a few years ago that luxury-branded hotels and homes could command huge premiums that the moneyed set would happily pay.

Having transformed New York and London, the wealthy are increasingly pursuing new havens. Miami is luring Argentinians, Brazilians, Chinese, Russians and French, some of whom seek refuge from political instability and higher taxes at home. The purchases go beyond the appeal of haute logos: Owning an asset priced in dollars can protect fortunes from the shrunken values of euros, pesos and rubles.

The pull is so powerful that developer Gil Dezer's Porsche Design Tower is mostly sold-out, even though construction won't wrap until early 2016, meaning that most buyers committed millions based on blueprints.

Shaped like a piston driven into sand, the concrete-and-glass Porsche Design Tower will contain three car elevators. Each can whisk a convertible up 60 stories and then slide it into the owner's personal steel-reinforced garage.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

market minute

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NOTICE OF HEARING FOR
Permanent Guardianship Order To
Mohammed Farah

Take notice that on the **14th day of April 2015 at 9:30 a.m., at Calgary Family Court, Courtroom #1208, 601 – 5th Street SW, Calgary, Alberta**, a hearing will take place.

A Director, under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act will make an application for: **Permanent Guardianship Order**; of your children born on **August 28, 2007** and **January 31, 2010.** If you wish to speak to this matter in court, you MUST appear in court on this date. You do have the right to be represented by a lawyer. If you do not attend in person or by a lawyer, an Order may be made in your absence and the Judge may make a different Order than the one being applied for by the Director. You will be bound by any Order the Judge makes.

You do have the right to appeal the Order within 30 days from the date the Order is made.

Contact: Jackie Ellice; Leanne Baines; Daniella Eggink
Calgary Region, Child and Family Services
Phone: (403) 297-2978

Faith Lennox forms a heart with her new 3D-printed hand at the Build it Workspace. DAMIAN DOVARGANES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3D-printed arm for $50

TECHNOLOGY

Inexpensive choice ideal for growing youngsters

Seven-year-old Faith Lennox never thought much about putting a prosthetic limb where her left hand had once been — not until she learned she could design her own, strap it on easily and then jump on her bike and pedal away at speeds previously only imagined.

Faith firmly placed her new hand's blue and pink fingers on her bike's left handlebar and took off for a lengthy ride around the Build It Workspace in Los Alamitos, Calif., on Tuesday morning. Inside, just a short time before, that hand had rolled off a 3D printer that built it overnight.

"I don't think we'll ever get her off it," said her mother, Nicole, smiling with resignation as she watched her daughter continue to circle the parking lot.

The prosthetic represents a breakthrough in small, lightweight hands that are economical and easy for children to use. It weighs only a pound and costs just $50 US to construct out of the same materials used to make drones and automobile parts.

When Faith outgrows it in six months or a year, a replacement can be made just as cheaply and easily, said Mark Muller, a prosthetics professor at California State University, Dominguez Hills, who helped with the design. He said a heavier adult model with sensors attached to a person's muscles would run $15,000 to $20,000.

Faith manipulates her hand without sensors. Instead, as she happily demonstrated after the bike ride, she moves her upper arm back and forth. That in turn opens and closes its blue and pink fingers — "my favourite colours," she noted with a smile.

The oldest of three children, Faith had compartment syndrome when her position during childbirth cut off the flow of blood to her left forearm, irreparably damaging tissue, muscle and bone. After nine months of trying to save the limb, doctors determined they had to amputate just below the elbow.

She had tried a couple of more traditional — and more expensive — prosthetics over the years but found them bulky, heavy and hard to use.

Her parents were working with the non-profit group E-Nable to get her a 3D-printed hand, but the technology is so new there's a waiting list, her mother said. Then she learned of what Build It Workspace could do from a friend whose son visited with his Scout troop. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE COMPANY

Small space, big ideas

Build It Workspace teaches people to use high-tech printers, provides access to them for projects and does its own commercial printing. The small studio was founded less than a year ago.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MUSIC

Tidal woos more artists to join firm

Tidal, the music and video streaming service co-owned by Jay Z, Rihanna, Madonna and other artists, is inviting more performers to join the company and earn equity.

Senior executive Vania Schlogel said late Tuesday that Tidal welcomes more acts. It introduced its new co-owners at a launch event on Monday. Co-owners including Beyonce, Daft Punk, Kanye West, Jack White, Alicia Keys, members of Arcade Fire and Jason Aldean attended the launch.

Artists who join the company would earn more money through the streaming service than through others that exist, Schlogel said.

A business controlled by Jay Z bought Tidal for $56 million US in mid-March. The streaming service, which has 540,000 subscribers, provides music and video content that users can stream on computers, tablets and smartphones or listen to offline.

Subscriptions begin at $10 US.

Schlogel didn't elaborate on how ownership works, and when asked if the artist-owners invested their own money in Tidal, she said she couldn't speak about those details.

Tidal's all-star lineup could help it compete with other free and paid streaming services, from Spotify to Pandora.

"It's not just dollars and cents, it's around all the things that come along with being a shareholder, like voicing your thoughts as a board member and having that creative control," Schlogel said, who added that there's a stock appreciation rights program for artists.

"It's a different type of involvement."

She said the only owners of the company are artists.

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Your essential daily news
Thursday, April 2, 2015

A lousy law

THE KOHLER REPORT

Rebecca Kohler

Earlier this week, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which, he says, "ensures that Indiana law will respect religious freedom and apply the highest level of scrutiny to any state or local governmental action that infringes on people's religious liberty."

It sounds nice, like he's just signed a law that says everyone can go to church and not be worried that the government might try to stop them.

This law is anything but nice. In layman's terms, this law says that business owners can choose not to serve customers that offend their religious beliefs. The example that's being most commonly referenced is that a Christian business owner can refuse to serve members of the LGBTQ community because they somehow "infringe on their religious liberty."

I keep looking at the calendar to see if it really is 2015. I keep checking Google Maps to make sure Indiana is in the United States of America — Canada's close ally and neighbour. What is going on here? And why doesn't Pence have a tiny square moustache?

What made this law particularly scary was that Indiana doesn't have any statewide anti-discrimination legislation when it comes to sexual orientation.

So theoretically, it meant that in certain Indiana cities, businesses would legally be allowed to put a sign in their window saying, "No Gays."

This, of course, rings a terrible bell and one can't help but think back to those "No Colored Allowed" signs found until just over 50 years ago in the southern U.S. Has Pence learned nothing from history?

Incidentally, if I came across any store that had any sign that said anyone was not welcome, I'd probably suffer an anger-induced bout of dyslexia and read it as, "Please throw rocks at our window."

The backlash to the law was refreshingly harsh: Connecticut announced a boycott of Indiana, the band Wilco cancelled a concert there, large business deals that involved the state were put on hold.

I couldn't help but laugh when during an interview with George Stephanopoulos, Pence called this backlash "intolerant." Yes, Mike, people are intolerant of intolerance and thank God for that — on Tuesday, Pence announced that he'd be amending the bill to make it clear that this law was not meant to condone discrimination against the LGBTQ community.

I believe in religious freedoms and liberties. Like how the Federal Court of Canada ruled it was unlawful to force a Muslim woman, Zunera Ishaq, to remove her niqab at her citizenship ceremony. She has every right to practise her religion. But if Ishaq owned a business and refused to serve me because I was not wearing a niqab? Well, that wouldn't be cool.

While I'm glad Pence has chosen to clarify this bill, I'm sad that there's even a bill like this that needs clarifying.

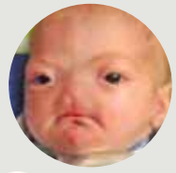
Rebecca Kohler is a standup comic, writer, actor, gymnast, lawyer and chemist. (Some of this isn't true.) Follow her on Twitter at @becca_kohler

Happy face/Sad face

From **miracle babies** to **corporate tomfoolery,**
Metro weighs in on the news that made headlines this week:

911 is not a joke

This is not an emergency. We repeat, this is not an emergency: Police in Idaho say a man who called 911 a dozen times complaining about his bar bill is facing a $1,000 fine and up to a year of jail time. The man allegedly made the calls after police gave him a ride home when he got kicked out of Club Tequila. The bar produced a receipt showing he was charged $30 for the 10 beers he apparently ordered.



One in 97 million

Among all the amazing babies that came into the world recently, this adorable little guy deserves a special mention. Timothy Eli Thompson was born without a nose, and guess what? He's doing just fine, having left the hospital this week. In his brief time on planet Earth, he's already made 20,000 friends via his Facebook page. Best wishes to him and his family.

Bad news for bears

In some super bummer news, a study published this week says polar bears forced onto land due to melting ice probably won't find enough food to replace their diet of delicious seals. Apparently the berries, eggs and birds they find on the mainland are no caloric substitute for mammals weighing 150 to 300 pounds each, mostly blubber. The bears love the cute little guys as much as Paul McCartney does.

Rascals!

Nothing like a little skylarking. On April 1, the always hilarious Microsoft launched MS-DOS as a mobile OS, those yucksters at CERN confirmed the existence of the Force, billionaire Lululemon founder and noted comic Chip Wilson posted a building permit for his future helicopter landing pad and uproarious pranksters Netflix launched a PSA on binge-watching. To these, and all the other fools in the world, thank you for the fandango.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Faith is splintering, but it is not dying

It's Easter. So I'm going to take my day off on Friday, and I'm going to church.

I probably won't see you there.

We all know statutory holidays like Easter and Christmas are only religious historically for many Canadians. Your weekend might be more about bunnies and chocolate and ham than celebrating our risen Lord. Correction: my risen Lord.

Religion has been on a downward trend in this country, but a new study shows that the picture is far more complicated than increasingly empty pews.

Faith is splintering, but it is not dying.

While subscriptions to major religions have fallen to 30 per cent from 45 per cent in 1985, the year I was born, we also now have a majority of Canadians straddling the middle ground between belief in a traditional faith, and belief in nothing at all, according to an Angus Reid study released last week.

The 44 per cent of us who consider ourselves ambivalent about religion "consistently seem to be open not only to religious beliefs, but to a range of other non-naturalist beliefs as well, such as psychic phenomena and astrology," the study found.

The finding suggests many of us believe we "cannot live by rationality alone." Which perhaps explains the two-thirds of us who the study found believe in an afterlife and a supreme being.

The study also showed that immigration is boosting the ranks of many Christian and non-Christian religions.

There are one million Muslims, 500,000 Hindus, and 330,000 Jews in this country, plus about 25,500 Pagans, 1,000 Rastafarians and dozens of other small faith groups, according to Statistics Canada data from 2011.

Plus the 22 million who, like me, identify as Christian.

I bet even many of these believers, like me, have what I'd call the personalized approach. For example, I believe in God, and that gay is good and the state has no place barring abortions.

Atheism might have had a pop culture moment, but with only 48,675 of us identifying as atheist, it hasn't sunk our collective sense of faith.

And I don't think it can. There seems to be something innate in humans that drives us to see life as more than this one moment, in this one day. The world seems vaster and more glorious and even more meaningful than its parts.

Belief is not something that we have learned our way out of. We appear to crave faith — in something.

So I'll take my Easter long weekend. And my Jesus in a totally non-ironic way.

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Tommie-Amber Pirie in Cancon non-rom com Page 32

Franchise holds Fast to formula

FURIOUS 7

Star Vin Diesel says this is the biggest F&F film ever

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse

Tyrese Gibson, left, Michelle Rodriguez, Paul Walker, and Chris Ludacris in a scene from Furious 7. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Furious 7 has already generated its share of column inches from entertainment journalists. The cast has spent the last few weeks doing the junket rounds, talking to everyone with a microphone or a notepad, generating sound bites and stories that have fed newspapers, websites and television shows.

Star Michelle Rodriguez, who plays Letty Ortiz, spoke of getting "pretty crazy" after co-star Paul Walker's death. "I was pushing myself to feel," she said by way of explanation of some of her tabloid-level behaviour in the last year.

Ludacris, who has played technical expert Tej Parker in four F&F films, told the Today Show, "We're about to make history as the most successful franchise of all time."

Vin Diesel has talked about naming his daughter after his friend and co-star Walker — "There's no other person that I was thinking about as I was cutting this umbilical cord" — and made grand pronouncements about the quality of his film.

"Universal is going to have the biggest movie in history with this movie," Diesel said, likely sounding as though he's dragging every word through sandpaper. "It will probably win best picture at the Oscars, unless the Oscars don't want to be relevant ever."

He's likely only half wrong. In 2011 he made a similar award season prediction about Fast 5 and while that didn't pan out, the movie made a fortune, grossing north of $600 million worldwide.

He's right to say that the new film will surely put the pedal to the metal and sell a lot of popcorn. Despite so-so reviews, the Fast and Furious franchise has an EZ Pass to the box office fast lane, grossing two billion plus dollars since racing into theatres in 2001.

"Just because they are for the working class doesn't mean they're not great," Diesel said.

F&F fans enjoy the formula, which can be broken down to essentially this: Swagger interrupted by a snappy one-liner, a wild car chase, a fight scene. Repeat.

The movies aren't Kierkegaard, and that's one of the reasons they haven't run out of gas yet. Over seven entries, they've remained loud and proud, lowbrow and unashamed. They're a wild celebration of muscle cars, muscle shirts and muscle heads.

Like an engorged Hot Wheels set, the films are playthings for the directors — there have been four over the run of the series — who toe the company line time after time offering up a car-crushing stew where sophisticated line readings and nuanced storytelling take a backseat to frenetic editing and in-your-face explosive action. They exist in a world where people only drink Budweiser and bastardizations like Bud Lime don't exist. That purity of vision is the beauty of the series.

Despite the loss of Walker, you can bet Furious 7 won't be the last movie in the series. As long as the formula works and the money continues to come in fast and furious, Diesel and company won't put these films in the rear-view mirror.

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

While We're Young	★★★½
Woman in Gold	★★★
Last Knights	★★½

HOW RATING WORKS	
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ACTION

Furious 7

Director: James Wan
Starring: Vin Diesel, Paul Walker

Continuing the global exploits in the unstoppable franchise built on speed, Vin Diesel, Paul Walker and Dwayne Johnson lead the returning cast of Fast & Furious 7.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 86% Audience: 98%

DRAMA

Woman in Gold

Director: Simon Curtis
Starring: Helen Mirren, Ryan Reynolds

The remarkable true story of one woman's journey to reclaim her heritage. Sixty years after she fled Vienna during the Second World War, an elderly Jewish woman starts her journey to retrieve family possessions seized by the Nazis.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 40% Audience: 90%

DRAMA-COMEDY

Danny Collins

Director: Dan Fogelman
Starring: Al Pacino, Annette Bening

Al Pacino stars as aging 1970s rocker Danny Collins, who can't give up his hard-living ways. But when his manager uncovers a 40-year-old undelivered letter written to him by John Lennon, he decides to change course and embarks on a heartfelt journey to begin a second act.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 72% Audience: 70%

DRAMA

Kumiko, The Treasure Hunter

Director: David Zellner
Starring: Rinko Kikuchi

In this darkly comedic odyssey, Academy Award nominee Rinko Kikuchi stars as Kumiko, a frustrated office worker whose imagination transcends the confines of her mundane life.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 88% Audience: 73%

DRAMA

Boychoir

Director: François Girard
Starring: Dustin Hoffman

Stet, a troubled and angry 11-year-old orphan from a small town, ends up at a boys choir after the death of his single mom. Completely out of his element, he finds himself in a battle of wills with a demanding choir master who recognizes a unique talent in this young boy.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 69% Audience: 71%

DOCUMENTARY

The Hunting Ground

Director: Kirby Dick

A startling exposé about rape crimes on U.S. campuses, institutional coverups and the brutal social toll on victims and their families. Weaving together verité footage and first-person testimonies, the film follows survivors as they pursue their education while fighting for justice.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 90% Audience: 56%

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Mirren is as good as gold for director

Helen Mirren plays the real-life Maria Altmann in Woman in Gold. CONTRIBUTED/ALLIANCE

WOMAN IN GOLD

Simon Curtis says the actress was a crucial part of new film

Richard Crouse
Metro | Canada

Woman in Gold is director Simon Curtis's followup to the Academy Award-nominated My Week with Marilyn, which chronicled seven days in the life of Marilyn Monroe during production of the 1957 film The Prince and the Showgirl.

In the new movie, Dame Helen Mirren plays Maria Altmann, a Jewish refugee of the Second World War who flees Austria to settle in the U.S. She enlists the help of young lawyer Randol Schoenberg (Ryan Reynolds) to help reclaim five Gustav Klimt paintings, including one of her aunt, Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I.

Looted by Nazis at the outset of the war, the iconic artwork (referred to as the "Mona Lisa of Austria" in the film) hung in the state gallery for five decades. The case wound its way for years through the courts, until it reached the U.S. Supreme Court and then binding arbitration by a panel of three Austrian judges.

He spent a week with Marilyn, the director teases, but years with Maria.

The story first grabbed his interest when he saw a BBC Imagine documentary on her struggle to reclaim artworks that were rightfully hers. He was taken with the character of Maria, who reminded him of many people he grew up with. "I'm from a Jewish family in London," he says, "and I met many women like Maria."

The resulting film plays like two thrillers — the present day legal story and the backstory — told in flashbacks.

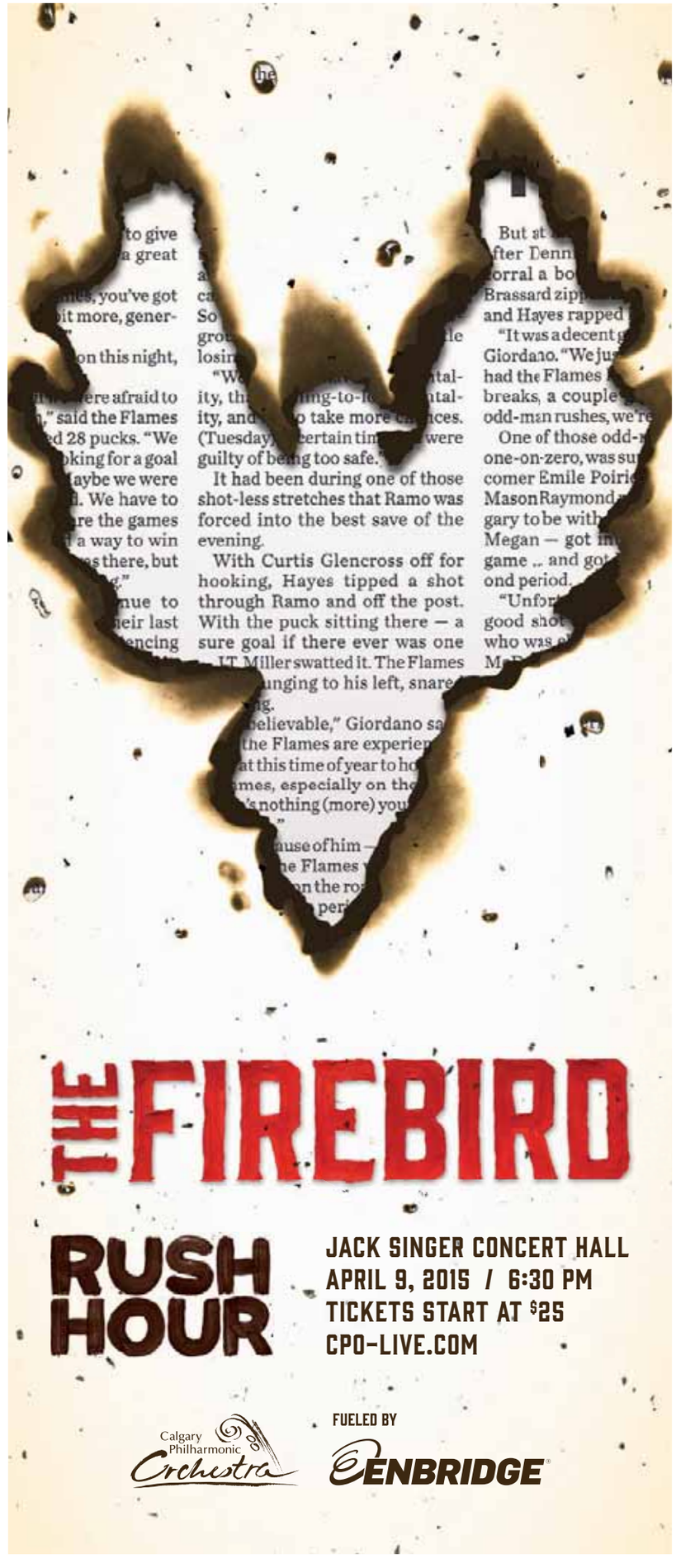
One is a procedural, one a horrifying look at the rise of Nazism in Austria, mixed and matched to form a whole. But Woman in Gold isn't strictly a movie about a lawsuit or Holocaust horror, it's really a story about the power of memories and heritage.

Curtis says the casting of Mirren was crucial to the success of the film. He needed an actress of a certain age and one who could portray the emotional range of a woman trapped between her real world pain and the memories she holds dear. On Mirren's face is the story, a vision of loss and anguish, but tempered with a tale of determination.

BACKGROUND

Some things never change

Curtis first met Mirren almost 30 years ago when he assistant directed a production of Measure for Measure in 1979. He remembers her as a formidable force and jokingly calls himself "her tea boy." "I sat with her in the kitchen and helped her answer fan mail and boiled water for tea," he says. "I did essentially the same job on this film."



REAL LIFE ON SCREEN

Wahlberg to produce movie about marathon bombing

CBS Films says Mark Wahlberg is set to produce Patriots' Day, a feature film about the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing based on Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis's first-hand account.

Matt Charman (Bridge of Spies) is writing the screenplay, which will span the five-day investigation and hunt to apprehend the suspects.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mark Wahlberg AFP

"I don't think it tarnishes my name at all. If anything, it's put me in front of an audience and created a bit of a fan base."

Director Matt Sadowski on his time acting in Power Rangers

Dov Tiefenbach and Tommie-Amber Pirie star in Pretend We're Kissing. ERIN SIMKIN/CONTRIBUTED

Not another rom com

CANADIAN FILM

Character study 10 years in the making

Steve Gow
For Metro

There's a reason why the creators behind Pretend We're Kissing are insisting the movie not be labelled a romantic comedy.

"They're considered second-rate films for the most part," said star Dov Tiefenbach during a recent interview to promote the Canadian film. "They're kind of considered date flicks or chick flicks, which is even derogatory — like chicks like bad movies. That's kind of sexist, I think."

In truth, however, the "non-rom com" from Toronto-playwright/actor-turned-director Matt Sadowski is reminiscent of such iconic romance films as Annie Hall or the Before Sunrise trilogy. A casual character study, it follows the fleeting fireworks that spark between a bashful would-be drummer (Tiefenbach) and a breezy beauty (Tommie-Amber Pirie of TV's Bitten) seeking a magical connection.

"It changed a lot," admitted Sadowski of the story he crafted a decade ago while cast as one of the costumed characters on cult-hit superhero show Power Rangers S.P.D. "Not to shake a stick at Power Rangers but coming from being a rising writer in the city of Toronto, and then going to do Power Rangers, I felt like I needed to do something more artistic. So I was like, I'm going to write a script, and this was the script."

Sadowski couldn't have predicted it would take 10 years to complete the film (which premiered across Canada on Wednesday) and, in fact, during that lengthy process, he even made another film just to keep motivated: the acclaimed documentary Don't You Forget About Me, an ode to legendary filmmaker John Hughes (The Breakfast Club).

While Pretend We're Kissing is certainly a long cry from a Hughes-like '80s teen comedy, it was an experience that taught Sadowski one thing.

"What I took from finding out about (Hughes) was he really just made films that he wanted to make," said Sadowski. "And I've got to say, more so than anything I've ever done, I'm most proud of this, and I hope people like it. But I like it — and that's the most important thing."

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Baumbach takes a crack at screwball

Ben Stiller, Noah Baumbach and Adam Driver on the set of While We're Young. CONTRIBUTED

INTERVIEW

Director serves up classic comic fare in While We're Young

Ned Ehrbar

Noah Baumbach's latest film, While We're Young, follows a documentary filmmaker in his 40s (Ben Stiller) and his wife (Naomi Watts) as they go down the Brooklyn hipster rabbit hole with a couple of Bushwick artist-types (Adam Driver and Amanda Seyfried). But in creating an authentically ridiculous hipster world, Baumbach had to be careful not to ape current trends for fear they'd be passé by the time the movie came out. The solution? Predict what the kids will be into next.

My first question, I guess, is f—ing hipsters, right?
Yeah, f—ing hipsters (laughs). From the time I started writing this script to when we shot it, the notion of hipsters in Brooklyn had already morphed and grown, and things had changed from even when I first started writing it, so I kind of was aware of the fact that to parody this specifically, I was always going to be behind it no matter what. So in a way I kind of made up my own version of it while also using tropes and things that we're all familiar with. The way we went about it was to make it interesting to us. I wasn't sure if people were on rollerblades again yet, but I was like, "Let's just do it, and I'm sure somebody's on them."

> **I wanted to do something consciously in a more traditional comic structure**
> Noah Baumbach

You could accidentally be setting the new trends.
Yeah, exactly. "What you all should be doing is rollerblading."

With Adam Driver's character, you have a remarkable portrait of a charlatan — a con-artist type. How much of that is in the casting?
There's always going to be that balance, because on the one hand, Ben falling in love with this guy is funny from the beginning even if you don't suspect he's something other than he claims. But definitely casting Adam broadened the opportunity with that guy in that he's so compelling and he's such a physical presence and he's so charismatic and interesting. So it allowed for a lot of flexibility.

This feels very much in the vein of classic screwball comedies, in that it's about a couple re-learning how to be together.
Yeah, comedies of remarriage. I wanted to do something consciously in a more traditional comic structure, and I was thinking of movies that Mike Nichols made like Working Girl, or Sydney Pollack with Tootsie, Jim Brooks with Broadcast News. These kinds of movies that felt like they were character comedies and relationship comedies, but there was a kind of gloss — and I mean that as a positive thing — element to them. They had a structure, and they were sort of that era's version of these screwball comedies, which I also love, all those movies. So I was aware of that. I wanted to do my version of that.

NEW YORK CONTINUITIES

Not to nitpick about New York locations, but you pass off the inside of the Time Warner Center as being in Lincoln Center in this. Are you worried eagle-eyed New Yorkers might call you out on it?
"Right, that's faked," says Baumbach. "The thing is that room, I've been to some events there and it is really beautiful. And Lincoln Center, what they have wouldn't read on film. It would feel sort of unclear. You're right to point that out, because I do take that very seriously, the anthropology of New York in my movies. I guess I'm asking for a bit of a pass on that. I wish it was different, but ..."

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Lili Sepe, Olivia Luccardi and Keir Gilchrist in the indie horror movie It Follows, now in theatres. MONGREL MEDIA

Big scares meant for big screen

INTERVIEW

It Follows director places viewer in the line of fright

Matt Prigge
Metro in New York City

The indie horror It Follows, like The Babadook last year, is being hailed as a genuinely terrifying antidote to bigger-budgeted counterparts, like Ouija. But its writer-director, David Robert Mitchell, doesn't come from the genre. His last film was 2010's The Myth of the American Sleepover, a tiny, sensitive American Graffiti-type teen movie. It Follows at times feels like that movie, with a 19-year-old (Maika Monroe) finding that, after sleeping with the guy she's been seeing, she's been given a strange curse: She will be followed by mysterious creatures visible only to her, who take on the form of regular people and will kill her if they ever catch her.

Let's get this out of the way: Some people have read this along the lines of old slasher movies, in which sex equals death. Your version doesn't seem so cut and dry, though.
I hope it goes beyond that. The characters certainly open themselves up to danger through sex. But sex is also a way in which they can be temporarily freed. It's not so simple. To me, it's not literally about sex. It's about life in general, sex being a very important part of that. By the act of living we are in danger. We all live with the idea of mortality in the back of our mind.... Sex and love are ways in which we can push death away, at least for a moment. It's a way of living in the moment.

Jay also doesn't just sleep around. She sleeps with someone she's been seeing.
Yeah, she cares about this person. Some people have read it as though that's the first time she's had sex. I don't see that, either. For me it's not about demonizing sex, or some kind of puritanical statement, as some people have said. Everyone has the right to think what they want about the film; I don't know how much my intentions matter. But it is interesting to see different reads on the movie. Horror films tend to create all kinds of responses.

Writer-director David Robert Mitchell GETTY IMAGES

This film will soon wind up on VOD. But it seems the ideal way to experience it is in a theatre.
That's the way to see it. So much of the film is in wide-angle shots.... We tried to shoot it in a way that you actually feel physically placed within these environments. You can look in the distance, you can look at the edges of frames. You're scanning the frames, looking out for the characters, looking out for yourself. It's supposed to be experiential. You're not going to get that as much if you watch it on a small screen. And the music — you want the sound cranked up.

BACKGROUND

When the characters aren't fleeing from a mysterious pursuer, the film hangs with them and it has a quiet, laid-back vibe. "When I wrote this I had just done Myth," says Mitchell. "I thought it'd be fun to take that idea and imagine a character from that world as a little bit older, then just throw them into a nightmare. The film is very much about waiting — about waiting for something to happen. It's about anxiety, about the middle spaces, where these characters are interacting in a normal way that could come straight from the other film, then they're waiting for something horrific to happen. The moments of attack are very different, but the moments in between are very similar."

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From Batman to 18th-century Scotland

SAM HEUGHAN

Outlander lead had high-flying gig before his breakout role

Richard Crouse
Metro | Canada

Sam Heughan has become something of a heartthrob playing a fiery 18th-century Scottish warrior married to a Second World War combat nurse who mysteriously transported back in time in the sci-fi romance Outlander.

The show, which returns to Showcase for its midseason premiere on Sunday, has developed a rabid fan base with as many as five million Americans tuning in to catch Heughan and his kilt each week.

The British Film Institute even reports that the show's popularity has inspired a tourism boom in Scotland.

On Heughan's recent trip to Toronto, fans lined up in the cold to catch a glimpse of the handsome 6 feet 2½ inches tall actor. "They were there," he says, "waving flags and supporting us. It is fantastic."

He says "that sort of thing is very new to me," although a recent trip to Comic Con was met with much excitement and on a stopover in Los Angeles, he was recognized for his work on the show.

"On the whole, it is very genuine," he says, "very friendly. They just sort of sidle up next to you and whisper, 'I really enjoy the show. I'm a big fan,' and they'll leave you to do your thing."

Ironically, the one place he isn't as well known is his home country, which also happens to be where they shoot the series.

"We've been filming in Scotland, so we're kind of in our own bubble. The show has only just aired in the U.K., so there is no recognition there, which is fantastic, because we can concentrate on the job."

Heughan trained at the prestigious Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama but says before signing on to do Outlander he was a "jobbing actor. I had done a lot of theatre and period drama in the U.K." He cites one strange acting gig in particular, playing the lead role in a touring production of Batman Live, as a real confidence builder.

"A terrific job," he says. "So different than anything I had done before — doing acrobatics, flying across stadiums over thousands of people. It did give me a lot of confidence to stand in front of twenty- or thirty-thousand people and have to fight 30 henchmen every night."

"I'll always remember the first entrance as Batman, flying 200 feet across the auditorium with people below and you're looking down at them thinking, 'This is something else.' They don't teach that in acting school."

> **It did give me a lot of confidence to stand in front of twenty- or thirty-thousand people and have to fight 30 henchmen every night.**
> Sam Heughan on his time on tour with Batman Live

Scottish actor Sam Heughan stars in the sci-fi romance Outlander. CONTRIBUTED

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HEALTH

Avril Lavigne says she has Lyme disease

Ned Ehrbar

OK, I officially feel bad about all the Nickelback jokes. Avril Lavigne has announced that she's been suffering from Lyme disease since October. "I had no idea a bug bite could do this," Lavigne tells People magazine. "I was bedridden for five months. I felt like I couldn't breathe, I couldn't talk and I couldn't move. I thought I was dying."

But don't worry, Lavigne says she's now "80 per cent" better and has a new outlook on life.

"This was a wake-up call," she says. "I really just want to enjoy life from here on out."

She's been recuperating at her home in Ontario with the help of her mom and her husband, Nickelback front man Chad Kroeger.

The tick-borne disease has symptoms including fever, headache and fatigue.

Singer Joni Mitchell hospitalized in L.A.

Joni Mitchell ALL PHOTOS GETTY

BEL AIR

Folk legend was found unconscious in her home

Joni Mitchell was in intensive care in a Los Angeles-area hospital on Tuesday, according to the Twitter account and website of the folk singer and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer.

"Joni was found unconscious in her home this afternoon," said a statement on the Mitchell website. "She is currently in intensive care undergoing tests and is awake and in good spirits."

It wasn't immediately clear what illness she had.

Los Angeles fire officials said paramedics answered an afternoon 911 call in Bel Air, where Mitchell lives, and took a patient to the hospital. But they could not verify her identity or give details on her condition.

The 71-year-old singer-songwriter told Billboard magazine in December that she has a rare skin condition, Morgellons disease, which prevents her from performing. Still, she released a career-spanning four-disc box set last year and appeared at Clive Davis' annual pre-Grammy party in February.

Mitchell has received eight Grammy Awards, including a lifetime achievement award in 2002. She was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1997.

Mitchell, who was born in Fort Macleod, Alta., is also a member of the Canadian Music Hall of Fame and the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame.

She started her career as a street musician before moving to Southern California, where she became part of the flourishing folk scene in the late 1960s.

Mitchell has released 19 original albums, the most recent in 2007. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE DAILY SHOW

Aasif Mandvi stands up for Trevor Noah

Longtime Daily Show correspondent Aasif Mandvi says he doesn't understand the recent fuss about future host Trevor Noah's Twitter account.

"I think it's much ado about nothing," said Mandvi while speaking as part of the LinkedIn Discussion Series at the company's New York headquarters on Tuesday. "The guy made some off-colour, irresponsible tweets, but he was trying to be funny."

As for fans of the show who were hoping that Mandvi himself would be tapped to fill Jon Stewart's shoes: The 49-year-old actor insists that he never wanted the job.

"I think they wanted someone who was a new fresh face," he added. "I don't know Trevor, I've met him a couple of times and he seems like a nice guy. I trust Jon Stewart and Jon seems to want him."

LAKSHMI GANDHI/METRO IN NYC

METHOD ACTING

Jamie Dornan walks the stalk

Fifty Shades of Grey star Jamie Dornan is quickly learning that there are some things better kept to yourself during interviews. Like the fact that while prepping for his role as a creepy serial killer in BBC series The Fall, he got some hands-on experience in stalking. "The first (season), I did a couple of things to try and get inside (my character's head)," he tells the Los Angeles Times.

"I did ... can I get arrested for this? Hold on ... this is a really bad reveal — I like, followed a woman off the train one day to see what it felt like to pursue someone like that. I really kept my distance and I was aware, it was kind of half-hearted, 'cause I was going like, 'If she turns around, is she going to notice?' She got off a few stops earlier than I was planning so I was like, 'All right, I'll have to commit to this here.'"

He then followed her several blocks, which is certainly not creepy at all, right?

"It felt kind of, like, exciting in a really, like, sort of dirty way and I'm sort of not proud of myself. But I do honestly think I learned something from it, you know, just 'cause I obviously have never done anything like that in my life, so it was intriguing and interesting to sort of enter that process of like, what are you following her for and what are you trying to find out?"

So would you mind terribly if you turned around to discover Jamie Dornan was following you home? I mean, for purely professional reasons?

NED EHRBAR/METRO IN HOLLYWOOD

Jamie Dornan

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Spring storage solutions Page 42

Mirroring the neighbourhood

CONDOMINIUMS

Unique designs pay homage to history of building sites

Megan Haynes
For Metro

The Stradbrook in Winnipeg is wrapped in glass shingles to reflect the surrounding wood-shingled houses. CONTRIBUTED

When Roland Rom Colthoff, director of Toronto-based architecture firm RAW Design, was asked to work on a midrise condo near Halifax's port, his team noticed the neighbourhood was replete with shipping containers. So they incorporated the containers into the building's design.

Shipping containers

The shipping containers (visible on the side of the building) celebrate, rather than conceal, the industrial heritage of the neighbourhood, he says.

"We didn't want to say 'Oh, don't worry, it's industrial, but you'll have a lovely house,'" he adds. "We wanted to say, 'It's industrial and you'll have a great place to live and show off your pride as a Haligonian.' (Condo buyers) can say 'I'm part of the port. I'm part of the community.'" The 142-unit building, expected March 2016, has sold out.

Southport is one of a number of new or recently built midrise buildings across Canada that pay homage in a unique way to the space on which they have been built, in a bid by architects and developers to create a sense of community among residents, and stand out in a crowded market.

Just look at Vancouver's King Edward Green development, which incorporates the famed Hobbit House (a picturesque fairy-tale house built in 1942) into its two-building midrise. Developer David Mooney says when a site has so much character, builders simply "have to find a way to preserve it. It shows we care about history and our heritage."

Glass shingles

That's not to say a condo has to conform to its historical roots to be a contextual fit for a neighbourhood, says Sasa Radulovic, founding principal and architect at Winnipeg-based 5468796 Architecture. He points to the Stradbrook midrise in Winnipeg that he and his firm worked on. Surrounded by historic wood-shingled houses, Stradbrook is wrapped in glass shingles, paying homage to its neighbours in a modern way. It creates a mirrored panelling, letting the building literally reflect its surroundings. Another 5468796 unit in Toronto features zig-zagged townhouses, meant to mirror the neighbouring suburb that, when viewed from above, looks staggered like a staircase. At the Tree House development (currently in pre-sales), all the units face the courtyard, which is meant to encourage neighbours to interact, he adds.

> **It shows we care about history and our heritage**
> David Mooney

Condo buildings are not isolated, adds Tudor Radulescu, architect and principal at Montreal-based Kanva. Buildings (and their inhabitants) are part of neighbourhoods, and they have to be woven into the urban fabric, rather than work against it.

Perforated steel

He points to a project completed in 2012 in a former Montreal industrial neighbourhood, which used to specialize in steel manufacturing. To pay tribute to that heritage, and to the two-storey building's recent life as a movie and TV studio, the architects wrapped the four-storey extension in perforated steel, to give the building the illusion of a curtain.

Effectively, it fits and it's nice to live somewhere that fits, he says.

"People are realizing they can buy a condo and it doesn't have to be an anonymous 40-storey tower where you (only meet neighbours) when taking the elevator," says Rom Colthoff. "They don't want to buy square footage. They want to buy into a community."

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What they're a$king

This week we look at pre-construction and new two-bedroom condominium suites in and around the downtown core. Buying a new condo from floor plans is a great way to save money and realize a profit down the road.

Duncan McAllister FOR METRO

VANCOUVER

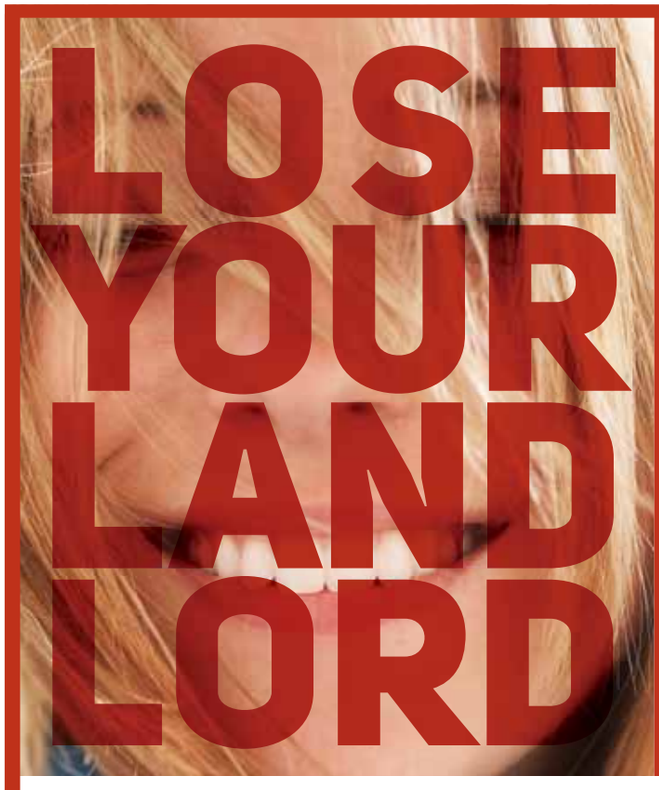
$485,900

The Park Metrotown by the Intergulf Development Group is located steps from Bonsor Park and the Metropolis in the heart of downtown Metrotown, a suburb of Vancouver. A two-bedroom condo in this building goes for $485,900. The condo, designed by Chris Dikeakos Architects, is under construction with a fall 2016 move-in date. Contact the sales centre at 604-936-1888.

CALGARY

$492,900

Smith is a boutique, 129-unit highrise and townhome development by Grosvenor. Designed by award-winning BKDI Architects, the 18-storey building is located in the desirable Calgary Beltline neighbourhood, near 17th Avenue, Calgary's retail and entertainment district. The G Plan starts at $492,900 for a two-bedroom, 855-square-foot suite that includes one parking stall. Contact the presentation centre at 403-264-1703.



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HALIFAX

$339,900

Southport is a sleek, new midrise condominium located where the city's historic South End meets the Port of Halifax. This is Urban Capital's first project out east, in partnership with Killam Properties. Located at 1057 Barrington St., the building has 142 units on six storeys. The largest unit is a 902-square-foot one-bedroom plus den, which goes for $339,900. Contact the sales centre at 902-456-5727.

OTTAWA

$560,900

Minto at Lansdowne is a new condo and townhouse development by Minto under construction at Bank Street and Holmwood Avenue. A 1,124-square-foot, two-bedroom plus den starts at $560,900. The project consists of two highrise towers and several townhomes located in historic Glebe. It has a total of 230 units and is scheduled for completion in 2015. Contact the sales centre at 613-788-2784.

EDMONTON

$392,000

The Fox One highrise condominium is a new project by Langham Developments currently under construction in downtown Edmonton. A two-bedroom, 940-square-foot suite will run you $392,000. This tower with 142 suites and 33 storeys will rise above the northwest corner of 102 Avenue and 104 Street in Edmonton's rejuvenated downtown and boasts a walk score of 98. Contact the sales centre at 780-425-0369.

WINNIPEG

$269,900

Glasshouse Lofts is a new condo at 311 Hargrave St., in the SHED (sports, hospitality and entertainment district) of downtown Winnipeg. Designed by Stantec Architects, the condo is currently under construction and occupancy is slated for spring 2016. With 21 storeys and 200 loft-style suites, the building has a selection of two-bedroom layouts available, with a 626-square-foot floor plan that starts at $269,900. Contact the sales centre at 204-282-9658.

TORONTO

$635,000

This sum gets you a two-bedroom, two-bathroom unit in downtown Toronto. Casa II is located at 42 Charles Ave., south of Bloor Street. The suite sits on the 33rd floor and has 763 square feet of interior space and a wraparound balcony that provides an additional 309 square feet of outdoor space. Contact listing agent Alex J. Wilson with Royal LePage Supreme Realty at 416-535-8000.

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Store it with style

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes

The time for spring cleaning and organizing is upon us. Like me, you may have accumulated more than you thought over the long winter months. Here are some fashionable and useful ways to store treasures in style.

In the clear

So many ugly packages to deal with. Empty their contents into an airtight container and keep everything in plain, and tidy, view. OXO Pop containers, from $11, CrateAndBarrel.com

Maximize your closet

Keep it organized in those condo dens with an instant closet organizer. Nebula by Bestar 80" storage cabinet, $920, Walmart.ca

Clothes keeper

Add some style to that dirty laundry. Portman faux leather laundry hamper, $99, UrbanBarn.com

Under the mattress

Under-bed storage means up to two less dressers in the bedroom. Drake bed, from $1850, UrbanMode.com

Multi-purpose surface

Rest your feet, eat your dinner and use the storage. Arlington lift-top storage ottoman, $169, BedBathAndBeyond.ca

A natural touch

Warm up the inside of those kitchen drawers with natural bamboo. Variera bamboo flatware tray, $20, IKEA.com

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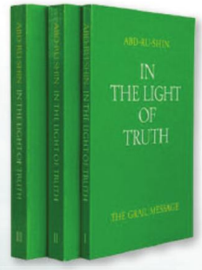

Was the crucifixion of Christ willed by God or not?

What did Jesus mean with His prayer of intercession on the cross: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do"?

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Six simple tips for selling your stuff

What you consider trash may be someone's treasure on eBay — and that means money in your pocket for your old things.

SPRING CLEANING

Make money off your unwanted items on eBay

Andrea Park
For Metro

Spring is finally here (supposedly), so it's time to clear the clutter. It's not easy to throw away things you paid a pretty penny for, but you don't have to toss everything in the dumpster.

Suzanne Wells, author of the blog eBay Selling Coach, started her selling career after she got divorced and lost her job in 2003; she started selling kitchen and home items, children's clothes and toys. Now, she's a top seller on eBay and supports her family with the money she makes. Wells shared her tips on how beginners can turn their trash into treasure.

Don't throw out your broken goods

"There's a lot of repurposing," says Wells. "Things that are broken or vintage that don't look so great can be refinished or redone in such a way that is desirable."

And Wells advises dividing and conquering. She gave one shocking example about Keurig coffee makers. "The water tank itself will sell for $20; the lid to the water tank will sell for $10 and the carousel stand that holds the coffee can sell for $30," says Wells. "Things in the kitchen cabinets that look like a jumbled mess are highly desirable… especially if it's an older model because they may not make it anymore. People go to eBay and find the parts they need."

You can list parts from other kitchen wares, computers, electronics and old game consoles.

Check completed listings to set a price

Wells says not to base your price on current listings, but completed listings, so you can see the price at which similar items sold.

Use the "Buy It Now" option

Auctions are the way to go if you want to get rid of something fast, but Wells says you'll get the most money if you select the "Buy It Now" with a "Best Offer" option.

Not only will you have the benefit of having your listing up for a longer period of time, ensuring you get more eyeballs on your item than in the seven-day time frame of auction listings, but you will also have your item show up on Google when you have a 30-day "Buy It Now" listing. Wells says if you know from past listings that it is possible to sell your item for a certain price, you should use "Buy It Now" to wait for the right buyer.

Use the "Best Offer" option

Wells says the "Best Offer" option is like a "reverse auction" because it gives wiggle room for buyers to haggle.

"I tell sellers, 'Price your item 20 per cent more if you're putting in Best Offer; there are a lot of people where negotiating is part of how they buy things, and if you don't have Best Offer, they may not want to buy anything from you at all.'"

Wells also advises not to set up the autodecline function for offers that are too low.

"If you list something for $40, and someone offers $39, the autodecline will turn that down and close that door," she says. "You might be more flexible if someone is buying several items."

Take great photos

Present things in the best light. "The computer screen is the only thing you've got between you and your buyer," says Wells. "It should be clear, cropped-in tightly. eBay estimates that 25 to 40 per cent of sales are made on mobile devices. If the picture is not clear or it's not cropped in tightly, it's hard to see and mobile buyers are impatient. They don't want to zoom in and try to see what you're selling." Wells suggests investing in a mannequin for clothing.

Choose your words wisely

Two things to keep in mind when writing your listing title and description: use words that describe the item, and use keywords buyers may be using in search terms.

"They say the first six words are most important — so think of the brand name, colour, size and the most important words that a buyer would search for."

Suzanne Wells, author of the blog eBay Selling Coach

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metro SPORTS

Serena Williams won her 700th match, topping Sabine Lisicki at the Miami Open

Thursday, April 2, 2015

Team Canada brushes off loss to post two more wins

CURLING

Simmons rink secures spot in Page playoff 1-2 matchup

Canada's Pat Simmons rebounded from his first loss at the world men's curling championship by winning a pair of games Wednesday, locking up a spot in the Page playoff 1-2 game in the process.

Simmons beat Switzerland's Marc Pfister 8-4 in the morning draw and topped Scotland's Ewan MacDonald 7-1 in the evening. The Canadian team of Simmons, third John Morris, second Carter Rycroft and lead Nolan Thiessen will take an 8-1 record into the final day of round-robin play Thursday.

"I'd say we're playing a good A game," Morris said. "But we want to get to an A-plus game."

Defending champion Thomas Ulsrud dumped Jiri Snitil of the Czech Republic 12-5 to join Canada in a first-place tie and secure the other 1-2 game berth. Ulsrud and Simmons will meet Friday night with a spot in the final on the line.

The third and fourth seeds will meet in Saturday's 3-4 game with the winner to advance to the semifinal against the loser of the 1-2 game. The semifinal winner will play for gold and the loser will play for bronze.

The medal games are set for Sunday. The Canadians, who suffered their only loss to Ulsrud on Tuesday night, are hoping to return to the podium after settling for a fourth-place finish last year in Beijing.

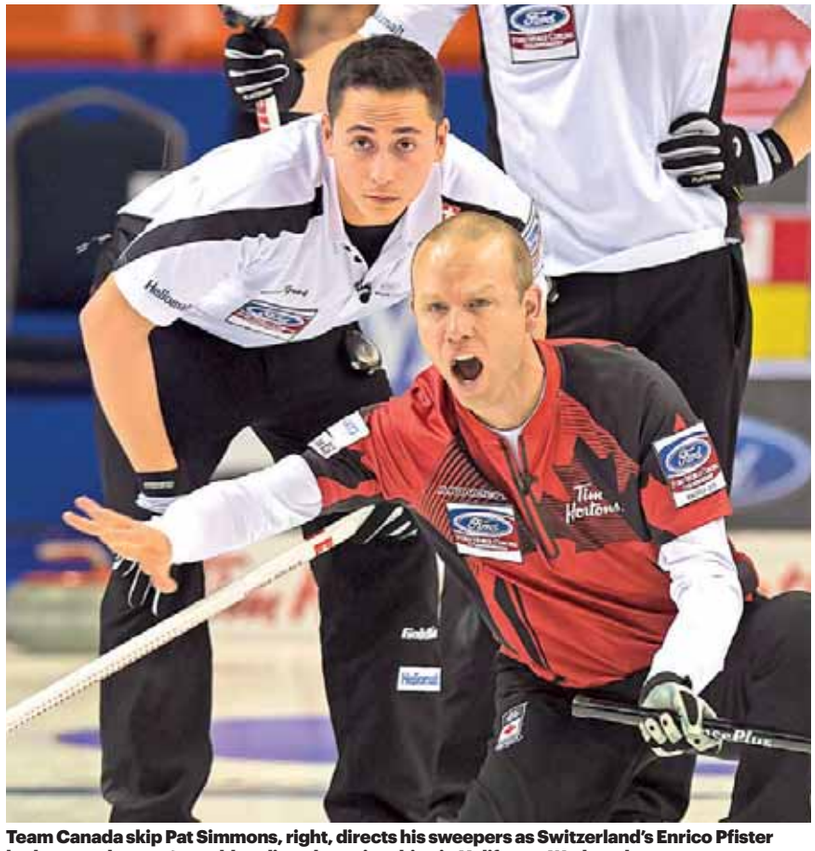
"That's a great team and they're the defending world champions," Thiessen said. "Was it (pro wrestler) Ric Flair who said, 'To be the man, you've got to beat the man?' So that's what we've got to do."

> **I'm happy to see that we bounced back.**
> Pat Simmons

Simmons was in form from the start against Scotland, picking up steals in the first three ends for an early 3-0 lead. MacDonald got one back in the fourth with an open hit but Simmons answered with another single in the fifth end.

Canada took a 5-1 lead in the sixth end and the teams blanked the seventh. MacDonald conceded after giving up a steal of two in the eighth end.

Canada will complete the round robing by playing Finland and Italy on Thursday. THE CANADIAN PRESS



Team Canada skip Pat Simmons, right, directs his sweepers as Switzerland's Enrico Pfister looks on at the men's world curling championships in Halifax on Wednesday.
ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Gaudreau named the top rookie for March

Calgary Flames left-winger Johnny Gaudreau was named NHL Rookie of the Month for March on Wednesday.

He led all rookies with 16 points (seven goals, nine assists) in 15 games, to edge Ottawa Senators right-winger Mark Stone. Stone had four goals and 11 assists in 16 games in March.

Johnny Gaudreau
GETTY IMAGES

Gaudreau is in first place in rookie scoring with 22 goals and 38 assists. He also earned the rookie of the month award in December.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Potential Blue Bomber transitions back to football

Jordan Reaves has reunited with his first love.

Reaves is a football player again after concentrating solely on basketball for the past 10 years. Despite the absence, the Winnipeg Blue Bombers put Reaves, 25, on their negotiation list.

Reaves validated that move by finishing second among receivers in the bench press (19 reps of 225 pounds), 40-yard dash (4.69 seconds) and broad jump (10 feet, one-half inch) at a CFL regional combine last month in Edmonton. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NOTICE OF DECISION FOR
Permanent Guardianship Order To
Sarah Ryan

Take notice that on the **25th day of March 2015, at Calgary Family Court, 601 – 5th Street SW, Calgary, Alberta,** a hearing took place.

A Director, under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act made an application for: **Permanent Guardianship Order**; of your child born on **December 23, 2003**. You did not attend in person or by a lawyer, and an Order for Permanent Guardianship was made in your absence. You will be bound by any Order the Judge makes.

You do have the right to appeal the Order within 30 days from the date the Order is made.

Contact: Jackie Ellice; Leanne Baines; Daniella Eggink
Calgary Region, Child and Family Services
Phone: (403) 297-2978

NOTICE OF HEARING FOR
Permanent Guardianship Order To
Stephanie Moose

Take notice that on the **14th day of April 2015 at 9:30 a.m., at Calgary Family Court, Courtroom #1208, 601 – 5th Street SW, Calgary, Alberta**, a hearing will take place.

A Director, under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act will make an application for: **Permanent Guardianship Order**; of your children born on **August 28, 2007** and **January 31, 2010**. If you wish to speak to this matter in court, you MUST appear in court on this date. You do have the right to be represented by a lawyer. If you do not attend in person or by a lawyer, an Order may be made in your absence and the Judge may make a different Order than the one being applied for by the Director. You will be bound by any Order the Judge makes.

You do have the right to appeal the Order within 30 days from the date the Order is made.

Contact: Jackie Ellice; Leanne Baines; Daniella Eggink
Calgary Region, Child and Family Services
Phone: (403) 297-2978

NOTICE OF HEARING FOR
Permanent Guardianship Order To
Jamal Jenkens

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Calgary Region, Child and Family Services
Phone: (403) 297-2978

Young Jays nudged out of the nest early

2015 SEASON PREVIEW

Inexperienced arms will shoulder plenty of responsibility

Blue Jays manager John Gibbons watches Miguel Castro, the heat-throwing Domincan 20-year-old set to come out of Toronto's bullpen this season. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Blue Jays opened spring training with a roster full of question marks.

"As strong as we are and as good as we feel about this team, there's some questions that need to be answered in spring training," Toronto manager John Gibbons said.

More than five weeks later, they come north with answers. Fans are about to find out if Gibbons and general manager Alex Anthopoulos ticked the right boxes.

The 2015 Blue Jays showcase some key veteran additions in catcher Russell Martin, third baseman Josh Donaldson and (currently injured) outfielder Michael Saunders — and a whole lot of youth.

The starting rotation includes Aaron Sanchez (22) and Daniel Norris (21) while the bullpen could feature 20-year-olds Miguel Castro and Roberto Osuna. Devon Travis, 23, starts at second base while Dalton Pompey (22) patrols centre field.

Drew Hutchison, 24, will open the season on the mound for the Jays in his 44th career start.

Sanchez has 24 games of big-league experience, Pompey 17 and Norris five. Castro, Osuna and Travis are true rookies.

Castro is a six-foot-five Dominican flame-thrower who has not pitched above Class-A ball. But the Jays organization loves his ability to find the strike zone at pace — Anthopoulos said the first time he saw Castro pitch in Vancouver, he thought the speed gun was stuck at 98 m.p.h.

Mexico's Osuna also has Jays officials enthusing.

The 25-man roster is not set in stone. The Jays have said they are still mulling over the merits of a seven- or eight-man bullpen. Should they decide on seven, infielder Ryan Goins is likely to be the benefactor, although that decision may not be made for some weeks.

The Jays kick off the season Monday in New York against the Yankees. Five games and a stop in Baltimore later, they host the Tampa Bay Rays. The April 13 home opener is the first of 10 games in 11 days at the Rogers Centre.

Hutchison, Sanchez and Norris will be joined in the starting rotation by veterans R.A. Dickey and Mark Buehrle.

While right-fielder Jose Bautista continues to be king of the Jays castle, the clubhouse seemed more accessible this spring with the arrival of the affable Martin. The $82-million US catcher chatted in English and French, openly discussed the challenges of catching Dickey's knuckleball and even showed off his many gloves.

When Bautista looked around the room early in pre-season, he saw a group that was "maybe an uptick or two more competitive than some guys that have been here in the past."

Bautista, 34, likes teammates who wear their hearts on their sleeve. A fierce competitor, he knows time is running out.

"The personal success has been great in the last five or six years but you crave to win," he said. "I've never experienced it but I guarantee you it's a better feeling sacrificing some personal success for some team success. I just haven't been in that position ever before but I would make that trade any day." THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **The personal success has been great in the last five or six years, but you crave to win.**
> Jose Bautista

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NOTICE OF DECISION FOR

Permanent Guardianship Order To

Timothy Gilliland

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Contact: Jackie Ellice; Leanne Baines; Daniella Eggink
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NBA

Williams works his magic while Raptors team up to take down tame Timberwolves

Lou Williams scored 18 points to lead a balanced Toronto offence as the Raptors defeated the Minnesota Timberwolves 113-99 on Wednesday.

Six players scored at least 13 points for the Raptors, who shot 55.3 per cent from the field. DeMar DeRozan had 17 points, Terrance Ross 16, Jonas Valanciunas 15, Greivis Vasquez 14 and James Johnson chipped in 13 for Toronto.

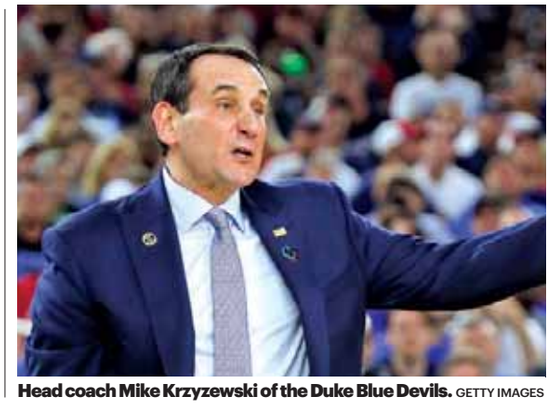
Andrew Wiggins scored 25 points, Zach LaVine had 22 and Chase Budinger added 19 for Minnesota, which lost its fourth straight.

Toronto led by as much as 31 in the fourth quarter.

The game was tied at 24 late in the first quarter before Toronto blew it open with a 26-7 run. Vasquez, who went 4-for-5 on 3-pointers, opened the second quarter by scoring the Raptors' first eight points, and Johnson added six straight to help push Toronto's lead to 50-31.

The Timberwolves cut the lead to 14 at the half, but the Raptors erased all doubt with a 17-4 run to open the third quarter. After hitting 10 of 19 3-pointers in the first half, the Raptors went to work inside, with Valanciunas hitting four baskets in the low post early in the third quarter.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Head coach Mike Krzyzewski of the Duke Blue Devils. GETTY IMAGES

Krzyzewski adapts to one-and-dones

NCAA BASKETBALL

Duke's Coach K has fostered five freshman departures

There was a time when Duke's Mike Krzyzewski led Final Four teams built around players who stayed for years to grow into tournament-tested veterans.

No longer, not in today's one-and-done world in which top players rarely stick around long.

The Blue Devils enter this week's Final Four relying on more freshman starters than John Calipari at Kentucky's NBA factory. The Blue Devils have three freshman players who face stay-or-go decisions after the season.

"What Coach K has done in my judgment, and I think Calipari has done the same thing, they've adapted to the landscape, and they are dealing with it in a positive way," said Jay Bilas, an ESPN analyst who played on Krzyzewski's first Final Four team in 1986.

Krzyzewski, the Hall of Famer in his 35th season at Duke and the winningest coach in men's Division I history with 1,016 wins, didn't have a player go pro early for nearly two decades.

Then in 1999, two Blue Devils bolted early: Elton Brand opted to enter the draft after his sophomore season and freshman Corey Maggette became Krzyzewski's first of five one-and-done players.

Luol Deng (2004), Kyrie Irving (2011), Austin Rivers (2012) and Jabari Parker (2014) followed in Maggette's lead. It's forced the 68-year-old Krzyzewski to adjust his approach compared to the days when Christian Laettner, Bobby Hurley and Grant Hill were four-year guys.

"It actually starts before they get here," Krzyzewski said.

"We try with the kids, especially if they commit early, to develop even a deeper relationship with them than we did 10 years ago."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Four-team women's hockey league to begin in October

A new women's hockey league promises to pay its players and reveal the source of the money soon.

The projected salary cap of $270,000 US per team works out to an average of $15,000 per player.

The National Women's Hockey League, which is scheduled to begin play in October, will consist of the Buffalo Beauts, Boston Pride, New York Riveters and Connecticut Whale.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cross-check could lead to suspension for Byfuglien

The Winnipeg Jets may be without defenceman Dustin Byfuglien for key games in their drive for the playoffs.

Byfuglien is facing a suspension of up to five games after delivering a vicious cross-check to the back of New York Rangers centre J.T. Miller on Tuesday night.

Byfuglien will have a phone hearing with the NHL's Player Safety department on Thursday.

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RECIPE Portobello Pitas with Red Bell Pepper Hummus and Goat Cheese

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Rose Reisman
rosereisman.com
@rosereisman

Ready in
Prep time: 12
Cook time: 12

Directions

1. To make the filling: On either a barbecue or a non-stick grill pan sprayed with cooking spray, grill the mushrooms over medium-high heat for 12 minutes, turning halfway or until tender and grill marked. Spray the mushrooms with vegetable spray if they look dry. Slice into thick slices.

2. To make the hummus: In the bowl of a small food processor, combine the chickpeas, roasted red pepper, tahini, lemon juice, olive oil, water, garlic and chili sauce. Purée until smooth. Garnish with parsley.

3. Spread the inside of the pita halves with the hummus. Place half of the mushroom slices in each pita, sprinkle with cheese, and garnish with lettuce, tomatoes and onions.

Ingredients

•3 large portobello mushroom caps, wiped (stems removed)

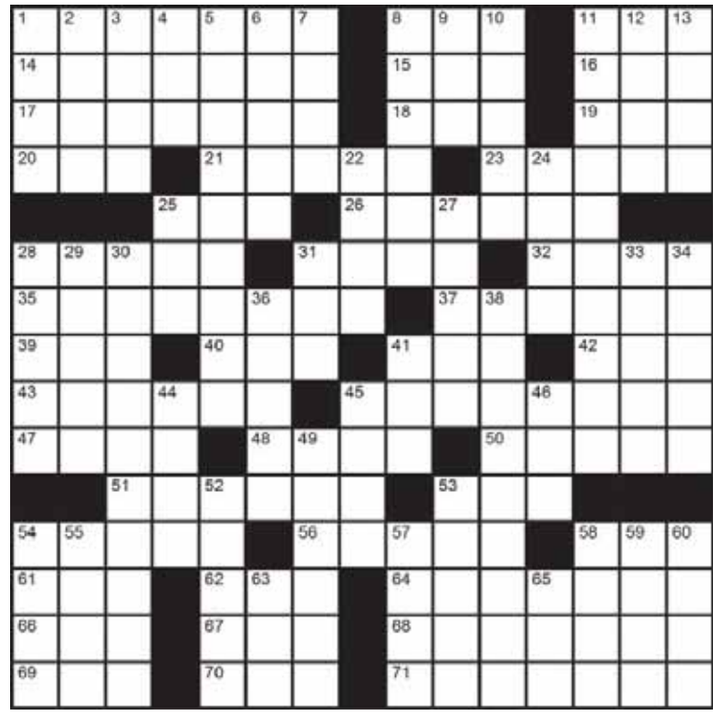
¾ cup Red Bell Pepper Hummus:
- ½ cup canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup roasted red pepper (about ½ small roasted red pepper)
- 1½ tbsp tahini (sesame seed paste)
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp water
- ½ tsp finely chopped garlic
- ½ tsp hot chili sauce
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley for garnish

Wraps:
- 3 medium-sized pitas, sliced in half
- ½ cup crumbled goat cheese (2 oz)
- lettuce
- sliced tomatoes
- sliced onions

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN

ANSWERS ONLINE metronews.ca



ACROSS
1. Ukrainian Easter egg (More at #30-Down!)
8. Texter's polite abbr.
11. Company abbr.
14. Ticklish music keys
15. Fair-hiring letters
16. Lionel Richie's "You __"
17. Measure of quality/excellence
18. South: French
19. "Glee" character
20. 'Meth' suffix
21. Actress Sonia
23. Enroll
25. Guileful
26. Earthy pigments
28. Fleetwood Mac's Christine
31. South Dakota dam
32. Town, colloquially
35. Restaurant kitchen VIP's uniform part: 2 wds.
37. Unclose again
39. __ and Magog (Hostile nations in Revelation)
40. 'To hear' in Spanish
41. Little: French
42. Ms. Zadora
43. Wayward
45. Eggs one day, perhaps
47. Paradise
48. Company dept. heads
50. Abrasive
51. Hangout for grapes
53. Ms. Wray
54. Guitarist Mr. Richards
56. Certain ISP user
58. Grand __ (Wine designation)
61. Cobbler's tool
62. Gossip columnist Ms. Smith
64. Baltimore __ (MLB team)
66. Address book no.
67. Yalie
68. Painted-ceiling Chapel for Michelangelo
69. Poet's 'before'
70. Riddle-me-__
71. Body decorations

DOWN
1. Type size
2. Hockey great Mr. Cournoyer
3. Fish kind
4. Jackie O's hubby
5. Consumes food, bunny rabbit style: 2 wds.
6. "Scandal" star Ms. Washington
7. On the Pacific
8. Passover
9. Mr. Reed
10. As per #8-Down... when The Four Questions are asked
11. The __ __ (Late-1490s masterpiece by Leonardo da Vinci)
12. Unfeigned
13. Red __, Alberta
22. Capricorn animal
24. Biblical mount
25. Wife of Thor
27. Whitesnake's "__ _ Go Again"
28. Janis Joplin's "Me and Bobby __"
29. Something strummed
30. Alberta town which is home to the largest #1-Across in the world
31. Paddle
33. Horseridder's hold-ees
34. Grind teeth
36. Pat Benatar's "__ __ with Your Best Shot" (Trivia! It was written by Canadian musician Eddie Schwartz)
38. Holy Communion
41. Acidity measures, commonly
44. Have _ _ to pick
45. Prefix that's 'Freezing'
46. Round Table knight
49. Santa Maria delle __ (Milan church where the mural at #11-Down is located)
52. Edmonton Oiler, e.g.
53. Hair dye brand
54. Ms. Hudson
55. Spouted water container
57. Confused
58. Muse of history
59. Vegas alternative
60. Functions
63. Island: French
65. Baseball's Mel

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
The Sun's alliance with Jupiter today means you will come up with a solution to a problem before others even realize that a problem exists. It's an advantage, personally and professionally.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You will say the right thing in the right way today, especially when dealing with people in positions of power. However, you don't need to boast, they will learn over the next few days.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You will find it easy to convince others to agree with you over the next 24 hours, not because you are forceful but because you know what words push what buttons for maximum effect.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Something unexpected will happen today, something that comes at you out of the blue. It may be annoying if it disrupts your plans but you won't be negative about it for long.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You don't need to justify what you believe or what you are doing to anyone. Fortunately, with your ruler the Sun linked to Jupiter in your sign today no one will question you. They simply won't dare!

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Don't wait for others to make decisions for you: make them yourself and, if anyone disapproves, so what? Anyone who thinks you can be intimidated is in for the shock of their lives.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You may have no idea how you reach certain conclusions today but don't doubt them for a moment. Your mind is open on a much higher level now, insights are to be expected.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
If ever there was a right time to try something new that time is now. You are more adventurous than a lot of people give you credit for. Be bold.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Today's link between the Sun and your ruling planet Jupiter means you can get away with almost anything. No, that is not an invitation to break the law but you can push the boundaries a bit.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The more others say you should be careful the more determined you will be to take some kind of risk. Are you right or are they right? You will have fun finding out.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Your confidence in your own abilities today will be on a different level than everyone else. The Sun's link with Jupiter means you no longer know what the word "cannot" means. You can do anything.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
If you are finding it hard to make up your mind about something then don't force it. Others may be pushing you to make a quick decision but only because it benefits them in some way

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

						6	8	
	6		5					2
		9			4			1
	4		1			3		
				4				
		8			3		5	
5			2			9		
1					8		3	
	9	6						

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